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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN

T E X A S

Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

MEXICO TRAVEL

Mexico will begin charging a \$15 **entry fee** on July 1 that will raise more than \$120 million a year. The revenue will be used to modernize immigration systems and more aggressively promote tourism. Visitors who arrive by plane, travel by land more than 16 miles into the country or come ashore from cruise ships for more than 72 hours will be charged the fee. The millions of day visitors and workers who move back and forth in the border economy are exempt. The *Austin American-Statesman* reports the hotel associations of six northern Mexican states object to the levy, saying it will strangle the tourist industry. The Tourism Ministry responded that Mexico is simply joining the majority of nations in charging tourists an entry fee, and that the money is needed to compete in a market where costly promotional campaigns are the norm.

COMING UP

Construction will begin this fall on a magnificent new building for the **Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth**. Nearly three years ago the museum acquired a 10.96-acre site in the Cultural District across from the Kimbell Art Museum. In 1997 Japanese architect **Tadao Ando** was selected from a pool of six internationally prominent architects to design the structure. Ongoing developments by Tadao Ando and the project team have resulted in a showcase of architectural renderings and a model of the museum's future home. The exhibit will remain on view indefinitely at the museum's

current location at 1309 Montgomery Street. The new building should be complete by the spring of 2002.

The **Slaton Railroad Heritage Association** has raised more than \$1 million toward restoration of the **Harvey House**, Slaton's only remaining Santa Fe Railroad structure. Originally built as a restaurant in 1912, the two-story building served the community as a passenger depot in its later years. When it reopens in July 2000, the revived structure will become the hub of a regional bus service and will house the Slaton Museum's growing railroad history collection. A portion of the building will operate as a bed and breakfast inn. For more info, call Slaton City Hall at 806/828-2000.

PLACES

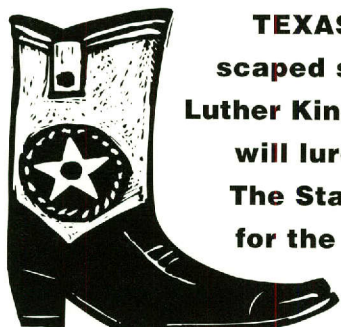
Through no fault of its own, **Sanderson** has been through some pretty tough times. Now the remaining 900 or so citizens

are raring to turn things around. For years, Sanderson was a main switching point for the railroad, and a center for oil, gas and ranching. Then I-10 was built, bypassing Sanderson 60 miles to the north. Loss of federal subsidies for wool and mohair production, as well as drought and depressed cattle prices didn't help. A final blow was struck in 1995, when Southern Pacific moved to Alpine, taking 50 railroad families with it. *The Dallas Morning News* reports Terrell County Commissioners took a giant leap toward revitalization in 1997 when they hired **Terry (Tex) Toler** as economic and tourism development director. When Toler arrived he looked around, saw plenty of cactus and declared Sanderson "Cactus Capital of Texas." In October the town hosted 1,500 people at the first-ever Prickly Pear Pachanga. Toler has continued efforts to attract travelers en route to Big Bend and has launched promotions that take good-humored shots at the competition. Three restaurants opened last year and

city slickers have bought adobe houses to fix up for weekend retreats. Toler hopes to sustain the town with tourism and cottage industries until a sewer system is built that could lure major employers and rebuild the population.

With the passage last month of Senate Concurrent Resolution 16, the 76th Legislature proclaimed **Lubbock** and West Texas as the official **Music Crossroads of Texas**. The resolution cites an impressive roster of West Texas musicians and formalizes the "reputation that has long been associated with the cultural landscape of West Texas." Lubbock city councilman **David Nelson** predicts the designation will increase tourism and spur the growth of Lubbock's entertainment and music production industry.

Route 66, the first transcontinental highway in the U.S., was significant in the development of Sixth Street and the San Jacinto area in Amarillo. Now the **Historic Route 66 Association of Amarillo** has published a hand-



TEXAS-SIZE KICKOFF In the spring of 2001, a landscaped stone plaza on the southwest corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue in Austin will lure visitors to the Texas State History Museum. The State Preservation Board has revealed blueprints for the new state-funded museum. A rotunda topped by a multifaceted dome will invite guests into the main entrances. Visitors will experience the vibrance of Texas history enhanced by special effects and an IMAX theater. The \$80 million appropriated during the last legislative session covers the cost of design and construction.

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

some new brochure touting the district's year-round shopping, dining and entertainment. Quaint shops, galleries, restaurants and historic attractions are found along a one-mile stretch on Sixth Street. Those who chance into the Goldenlight Cafe take an unexpected shortcut to old Route 66's heyday. Daily blue plate specials are served up by the same family who opened the restaurant in the 1940s. The district, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, has become the backdrop for the Summer Festival, nightly entertainment and special events. For more info, call 806/372-US66.

Houston's long-sought air link to **Tokyo** became a reality at the end of January when **Continental Airlines' Flight 7** departed Bush Intercontinental Airport. The new nonstop service represents the culmination of a 30-year effort by the Houston Airport System and the city of Houston.

SeaWorld San Antonio opened its 1999 season in grand style with new attractions and park-wide improvements. The new pulse-pounding **Steel Eel** roller coaster, the only hypercoaster in the Southwest, races up and down camelback humps at speeds reaching almost 70 mph.

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

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Layout: Jane Sharpe/Sharpe Design

AMARILLO TIC A group of weary travelers stopped in the center to stretch their wings. They normally preferred flying, they said, and so the slow journey from Colorado across mountain and plain had taken its toll. Bald Eagle, Great Horned Owl and Peregrine Falcon perched

upon their humans, and happily flapped their wings. Then it was off to Arlington, the site of a grand bird show.

JUDGE ROY BEAN TIC

This year's mild weather brought an added treat for winter visitors — the smell of fresh blossoms in

the popular cactus garden. Manager Neal Billings said the garden now bursts with a symphony of color. Red-flowered yucca, algerita, huisache, black brush, Texas mountain laurel, redbud and claret cup have announced the official arrival of spring.

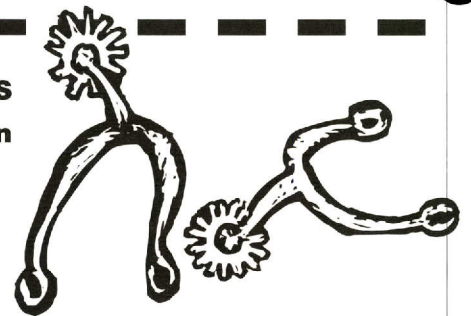
Riders experience exhilarating periods of weightlessness, a signature feature of a hypercoaster. For smiles and laughter, visitors gather at the Sea Lion, Walrus and Otter Stadium, where sea lions Clyde and Seamore muddle through a home-repair nightmare at the all-new **"Fools With Tools"** show. Special events are planned for throughout the '99 season, which runs through October 31. For operating schedules, call 210/523-3611.

Texas boasts hundreds of museums, covering every subject imaginable. Or so we thought until the doors opened last month on the **Tears of Joy Hot Sauce Museum**. O'Shucks Tamales at 618 E. Sixth Street in **Austin** has pushed aside its tables and chairs to make way for a joint venture with J.P. Hayes of Sgt. Peppers products. You'll find no dried bones and Egyptian artifacts here. It's a here-and-now kind of place, where visitors are invited to belly up to a sampling bar offering more than 300 different brands of salsas, sauces, marinades, relishes, pestos and other spicy treats. Although selected "museum pieces" are not for sale, you can purchase most products, including Dave's Gourmet Insanity Sauce, the "hottest sauce in the universe," and Redneck Gormay hot sauce, ranging in heat level from sweet thang to sweat thang. Open Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For info, call 512/499-0766.

The old Dallas County Courthouse reopened on March 16 as a new **visitor center** for the Dallas C&VB. The 1892 structure, known affectionately as **Old Red**, was transformed into a large state-of-the-art, high-tech interactive facility. Eight kiosks featuring a touch-screen system allow visitors to access detailed information on Dallas sites. Maps linked to the database give direc-

tions from Old Red to attractions, restaurants and hotels. Visitors can swipe a credit card at the Internet Cafe to retrieve and send email. Old Red is conveniently located near two DART light-rail stations, and across from the old Texas School Book Depository that houses The Sixth Floor Museum. Open daily at 100 S. Houston Street. Call 1-800-232-5527 for more info.

IF THE SPUR FITS
A fifth-generation working cattle ranch will open its gates in May for wannabe



wranglers. Elkins Ranch, near Palo Duro Canyon State Park east of Canyon, will sign on novice and experienced cowhands for two-and-a-half day cattle drives from the floor of Palo Duro Canyon to lush pastureland on the canyon's rim. Cattle drives are staged every other week, Wednesday through Friday. On alternate weeks visitors can take overnight pack trips into the nation's second largest canyon. The ranch also will offer horseback rides, guided Jeep tours, wagon rides, cowboy suppers and limited RV camping. For information, call 806/488-2100.

In the spring of 1987, **Bob Phillips**, television host for "Texas Country Reporter," stumbled upon one of the few remaining cable suspension bridges in Texas. The bridge spanned the Colorado River near the ghost town of Regency between **Goldthwaite** and **San Saba**. When he began using the **Regency Bridge** in the opening of his show, Phillips said people began calling to find its whereabouts. The phones, he said, "have not stopped ringing since." *The Dallas Morning News* reports since August the bridge has been closed for more than \$1 million in repairs, forcing ranchers and tourists on both sides of the river to drive 40 miles out of their way. The 1939 structure reopened last month in grand style as bands from area schools lined the banks of the river to play the "Texas Country Reporter" theme song while Bob Phillips once again drove his Suburban across Regency Bridge. "What once was merely a functional bridge for ranchers now is a tourist attraction," *The News* said.

F A C E S

Linda Fort was selected as new executive director of the **Lubbock C&VB**. Linda previously served as vice president of tourism for the Denver Metro C&VB, where she directed all tourism marketing efforts. She began her tourism career in Kerrville, working ten years as sales and marketing manager and general manager in the hotel industry. Welcome Linda back to Texas by calling 806/747-5232. Or send her an email at lfort@lubbocklegends.com.

The Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus let us know about a few other new faces. **Jim Clark**, formerly of the Tampa/Hills-

borough C&VB, has joined the **Irving C&VB** as its executive director. . . . **David Lee** is the new president and CEO of the **Brownsville C&VB**. . . . **Don Raulie**, previously with the Hot Springs Advertising and Promotion Commission, has accepted the position of director at the **Laredo C&VB**. . . . **Rebecca**

? TEXAS TRIVIA

Who is known as the heroine of the Archive War?

In March 1842, during the Republic of Texas days, a division of the Mexican army charged into San Antonio, demanding surrender of the town. President Sam Houston, fearing a move on Austin, called the Texas Congress to Houston for an emergency session, then the Seventh Congress into regular session at Washington-on-the-Brazos. The incident startled the citizens of Austin into suspecting a move of the capital from their hometown. They formed a vigilance committee and warned department heads that any attempt to move state papers would be met with armed resistance. They expressed their wrath by shaving the tail and mane of the horse of the courier sent to retrieve the archives. Houston ordered a second rescue team to recover the documents. The men were prepared for resistance, but were not prepared for the enterprising and spirited Angelina Eberly. When Mrs. Eberly spotted a wagon backed up to the land office, she knew Old Sam was at it again. She rushed over to Congress Avenue, where a six-pound cannon loaded with grapeshot was waiting, and fired at the building. The papers were seized by a band of angry citizens. From the time of the Convention of 1836, the Texas capital moved 11 times. The courage, if not fury, of Angelina Eberly, as well as elections in 1850 and 1872, assured Austin's station as the capital and keeper of the Texas archives.



FORECAST OF SHOWERS The Texas Coastal Bend Regional Tourism Council reports several Coastal Bend communities will share nearly \$432,000 in federal grants that will help pay for projects ranging from seawalls to showers. Work begins this summer to improve beaches in Aransas, Kleberg and Nueces counties.

Ybarra was promoted to director of the **San Marcos C&VB**. . . . **Pam Fitch** was selected as director of the **Nacogdoches C&VB**.

W I L D L I F E

An expansive, two-acre wooded area near the heart of the **Fort Worth Zoo** became the home of American bison, Mexican wolves and wild turkeys with the opening last month of **Thundering Plains**. The exhibit focuses on the struggle for survival faced by native wildlife. The Mexican wolf once roamed throughout northern Mexico, the southern regions of Arizona and New Mexico, and West Texas. Now there are fewer than 200 Mexican wolves in captivity and none in the wild. The zoo, which participates in a national Species Survival Plan, hopes to help bring back this species from the brink of extinction. The American bison, on the other hand, represents one of the nation's most successful conservation efforts. The Fort Worth Zoo is currently working to help 34 endangered species through American Zoo and Aquarium Association Species Survival Plans. Open daily on Colonial Parkway. Call 817/871-7050 for more info.

E V E N T S

Douglas Granville Chandor of England was already an internationally acclaimed portraitist when he fell in love and married a woman named Ina from **Weatherford**. They settled in Ina's hometown in the early 1930s, where Chandor created a living masterpiece of Chinese and English gardens in tribute to his young wife. When **Charles and Melody Bradford** bought the Chandor home in 1994, the only thing left of the gardens were a few old trees. With a handful of color photographs to go by, the Bradfords lovingly restored the gardens to their original splendor, a project that took four years. The **Chandor Celebration**, April 24 through June 27, will showcase the 3.5 acres of formal gardens with its waterfalls, fountains, grottoes and an English bowling green. Twenty of Chandor's paintings will be on view in Texas Hall on the Weatherford College campus. An extensive collection of memorabilia can be seen at the city library in Heritage Gallery. Chandor Gardens are also open Sunday afternoons, March 1 through November 14, and at other times by appointment. For details, call 817/613-1700.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	15,141	+42.09	31,308	+29.37
Anthony	12,771	-11.63	33,009	-24.48
Denison	23,025	+15.07	54,900	+9.87
Gainesville	38,385	+15.91	88,890	+6.20
Langtry	12,507	-15.49	27,723	-14.57
Laredo	10,698	-36.29	26,913	-40.59
Orange	48,417	+5.05	128,766	+1.63
Texarkana	35,973	+1.77	85,284	-7.25
Valley	48,582	+6.11	166,644	+14.65
Waskom	44,547	+0.60	95,511	-20.56
Wichita Falls	18,810	+8.80	46,890	+15.21
Capitol Complex	15,879	+34.44	32,619	+23.80
CENTER TOTALS	324,735	+4.61	818,457	-1.46

	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Mail Services	175,193	286,559
Literature Distributed at Trade Shows	0	12,600
Automated Attendant Road Condition Calls	19,233	65,360

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Data as of March 31, 1999

*Compared to last year

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