

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

INSIDE:

- ★ Matalka, Sansom and Rosser honored with awards at Travel Summit
- ★ Amadeo Saenz named TxDOT's new Executive Director
- ★ Magazine touts San Bernard National Wildlife refuge as top destination for coastal hikes

CENTER GROWTH

QUITAQUE's Caprock Canyons State Park — more than 14,000 acres of rugged, picturesque redrock canyonlands carved by tributaries of the Red River — celebrated its 25th anniversary with the unveiling of its new **\$1 million visitor center** in October.

The center, which has been in the works since 1999, is 4,400 square feet and includes unique features like a bison-viewing platform overlooking the Texas State Bison Herd, the surviving remnants of the only genetically pure herd of the Southern Plains bison.

Visitors can enjoy the State Park Store, lobby, registration area, park maps, a group meeting pavilion, 24-hour restrooms; and interpretive panels about bison conservation, park geology and its 29 miles of trails. The staff will benefit from administrative offices and storage space.

"The informative exhibits are being designed to create a concise and cohesive interpretive narrative about the cultural and natural resources of the state park, the Southern Plains Bison Herd and Caprock Canyons Trailway," says park superintendent Deanna Oberheu. "A new sidewalk connects the center to the bison overlook, where we've installed telescopes to spot the Texas State Bison Herd in its native habitat."

CORPUS CHRISTI Convention and Visitors Bureau has partnered with Stripes convenience stores to bring **interactive, wireless kiosks to 15 stores** that will help tourists find attractions and accommodations. The kiosks were placed in different locations across the city.

"In this Internet age, it is important for us to distribute and provide information to the public in electronic form," says CVB President and CEO Keith Arnold. "This also will help people 24 hours a day because most of the Stripes stores are open 24 hours."

The kiosks will be able to print

FREE EXHIBIT SPACE



Travel counselor Christy Gentry assists a traveler in front of the exhibit space at Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Information Center in Waskom.

APPPLICATIONS for free exhibit space at TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers will be **accepted from 8 a.m. on Dec. 3 to 5 p.m. on Dec. 10**. All city convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, and rural and regional tourism organizations that promote travel to a specific region in Texas (with a minimum of three cities representing that region) can apply for the free space on a six-month, rotating basis. Applica-

tions are for the upcoming rotation — March 1 through Aug. 31, 2008. Exhibit space will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications submitted before or after that time period will not be eligible for consideration.

For more information, contact Theresa Olson at tolson@cot.state.tx.us or Martha Martin at mmart4@dot.state.tx.us. To access the online application, go to www.txdot.gov and enter the keyword "display case."

information for tourists.

Arnold hopes to increase the number of kiosks and include them in other locations such as Padre Staples Mall.

The bureau has visitor centers on Padre Island and Chaparral Street. The bureau's Labonte Park center has been closed most of this season because of Nueces River flooding.

TRAVEL TRENDS

EL CAMINO REAL Paddling Trail — the first of six potential trails to be designated on the lower Colorado River and the fourth such inland trail in the state — **opens Nov. 3 in Bastrop** with city

and state officials on hand to mark the occasion.

The six-mile long route, along the Colorado River and in the heart of the Lost Pines region, begins where the legendary El Camino Real crossed the lower Colorado River in Bastrop (at Fisherman's Park) and extends to the Tahitian Village takeout.

Next year, the 14-mile Wilbarger Creek Paddling Trail is planned upriver from the Utley Bridge at FM 959 to Fisherman's Park, and a 4-mile Red Bluffs Paddling Trail will be created downriver.

Bastrop Mayor Tom Scott says, "We are honored to be working with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Depart-

ment on a program that will enhance the nature tourist's knowledge of the Colorado River and its rich history through our historic downtown, our state parks and natural areas and throughout the Lost Pines."

Last summer, Texas Parks and Wildlife teamed with the City of Luling and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority to create a trail on a 6-mile stretch of river there. The agency also has designated seven saltwater trails along the Gulf Coast, from Brownsville to Galveston Island, and hopes to expand the network all over the state.

EL PASO has officially expanded its tourism offerings — heeding statistics that shopping is the second major draw for out-of-town visitors — **by adding a 385,000 square foot factory outlet shopping center**. The much-anticipated Outlet Shoppes of El Paso opened Oct. 11.

Bill Blaziek, General Manager of the El Paso CVB, says, "We share as much, if not more, excitement at the opening of the new outlet mall because it will bring many new leisure visitors from the surrounding region, including Ciudad Juarez, to El Paso."

Blaziek hopes the new outlet mall will do for El Paso what outlet malls in San Marcos and Tucson have done for Austin and Phoenix, respectively.

"We are excited at the addition of the outlet mall because as research shows, shopping is the number two reason visitors select a destination, right above sightseeing, visiting a historic site or even visiting a theme or amusement park," says Blaziek.

Blaziek hopes both factors (shopping and sightseeing) will make the outlet mall appealing to visitors from the neighboring state of Chihuahua.

WINNING EVENTS

THE INTERNATIONAL Festivals & Events Association presented the annual Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards for outstanding

SUMMIT: TRAVEL INDUSTRY HONORS EXCELLENCE

THE 2007 TEXAS Travel Industry Association's Travel Summit, held in Houston in September, was the perfect setting for unveiling the state's new tourism ad campaign, but it was also a time to honor key participants who help propel the state's tourism.

Tall in Texas: Jutta Matalka, director of tourism and the Film Commission at the Amarillo Convention and Visitors Council, was honored with the prestigious Tall in Texas Award, given annually to an individual who has changed the face of the industry on a local, regional or statewide level through his or her commitment and influence.

Matalka, who received her U.S. citizenship in 2004, has more than 30 years of experience in the travel industry, logging thousands of miles — from Europe (especially her native Germany) to South America — to promote Amarillo and Texas. She joined the Amarillo CVC in 1995. Prior to that, she worked at the El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau, Hilton Hotels, and several European tour operations.

"Jutta Matalka has worked tirelessly to promote the State of Texas around the world. She is usually the first in the booth in the morning and the last one at the end of the day. Jutta always wears her hat and boots because she knows that



Jutta Matalka

the first step to getting visitors to Amarillo is to get them to Texas. Her devotion and love for Amarillo and the State of Texas make her a perfect choice for the Tall in Texas Award," says Jerry Holt, Vice President of the Amarillo CVC.

Lifetime Achievement Award: Andy Sansom, executive director of the River Systems Institute and research professor of geography at Texas State University, was honored for being one of Texas' leading conservationists. Sansom, a former executive director of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department who implemented many important programs during his service there, is executive director of the Texas Nature Conservancy and founder of the Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas. He has served on the board of

trustees of the Texas Historical Foundation, Bat Conservation International, KLRU Public Television in Austin, and The National Audubon Society. He was on the staff of the National Recreation and Park Association in Washington, D.C., in 1969. He served as environmental coordinator for the White House Conference on Youth; special assistant to Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton; director of conservation education at the Federal Energy Administration; and deputy director of the Energy Institute at the University of Houston.

Sansom has published works in various magazines and has published books including *Texas Lost* and *Texas Past*.

Spirit of Texas Award: The "Spirit of Texas" Award was presented to the family of the late **Howard W. Rosser** in recognition of his work in the field of tourism during the last 50 years for the State of Texas and the East Texas Region. The award was presented to Rosser's wife, Kathy and daughter, Leslie Rosser. Daughter Belinda Gunckel was unable to attend.



Leslie Rosser (left) and Kathy Rosser

Rosser, who died April 5, was considered a pioneer in the tourism industry who put the Piney Woods and East Texas on the map for visitors from all over the world. Some would say he invented regional tourism. Rosser and wife, Kathy, have been recognized by the Texas Governor's Office several times for outstanding promotion of tourism in East Texas.

Ann Vaughan of the Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Bureau and **Alan Hughes** of Traders Village were recognized at the travel Summit with the **Mark of Distinction Award** from TTIA's staff.

festival and event promotions, including many for Texas events, on Sept. 19 in Atlanta.

Entries from across the globe are recognized in every budget category — under \$250,000, \$250,000 to \$749,999, \$750,000 to \$1.5 million, and more than \$1.5 million.

Hidalgo's Borderfest 2007 *A Salute to Ireland*, led the pack in its budget range with 30 awards in various categories, including the Grand Pinnacle Gold award for the \$250,000 to \$749,999 budget category.

Other Texas events and organizations that were honored include Washington's Birthday Celebration (Laredo), Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival, Neiman Marcus/Adolphus/Children's Parade (Dallas), Pasadena Strawberry Festival, Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival (Richardson), Cottonwood Art Festival (Richardson), Alamo Bowl (San

Antonio), Galveston Historic Homes Tour, Fiesta Oyster Bake (San Antonio), *Eat's Today* magazine, Baytown Film Festival, Dickens on the Strand (Galveston), Fiesta San Antonio, Wal-Mart Posada & Snow Fantasy (Spring Branch/Houston area), Eat's Bicycle Ride, Oktoberfest (Addison), Texas Event Leadership Program, and the Red, Hot and Blue Festival (The Woodlands).

For a complete listing of winners, visit www.ifea.com

NEW LEADER

TRANSPORTATION engineer **Amadeo Saenz**, who has served as **Texas Department of Transportation's** assistant executive director for engineering operations since 2001, was named the agency's **new executive director**. The Texas Transportation Commission made

the announcement on Sept. 27.

"Amadeo has the unique combination of experience, knowledge and skill necessary to lead TxDOT and meet the growing transportation challenge we face in Texas," says Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Ric Williamson.

Commission member Fred Underwood adds, "Amadeo is eminently qualified to focus the employees of the department on reducing congestion, enhancing safety, expanding economic opportunity, improving air quality and increasing the value of the state's transportation assets."

Hebbronville native Saenz, 51, joined TxDOT in 1978 and held many engineering positions in the Pharr District. He later became district engineer in TxDOT's Pharr District from 1993 to 2001 and was in charge of all department activities in an eight-county region. That includ-

ed overseeing emergency repairs to the Queen Isabella Causeway after a barge hit it in 2001.

Saenz is the 19th person to head the agency, and the first Hispanic executive director in the agency's 90-year history.

INDUSTRY INSIDERS

GREG ORTALE, president and CEO of Meet Minneapolis, begins his **new** role as **president and CEO of the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau**, beginning Dec. 5.

Ortale replaces Jordy Tollett, who resigned last December. Ortale was formerly Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Council in 1984. In 1985, he was the first president of the Texas Travel Industry Congress, a lobbying coalition of travel-related associations. He went

on to found the Minnesota Alliance for Convention Center Expansion.

Melvin Tennant, former executive director of the San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau, will become acting president and CEO of Meet Minneapolis when Ortale leaves. Tennant is currently serving as senior vice president of innovation and operations for Meet Minneapolis.

LARRY WOODS, with more than 20 years of service in the tourism industry, has been selected as the **new tourism director for the Boerne Chamber of Commerce**, taking the position left vacant by David Cooksey.

Woods, president of The Woods Group, has experience in hospitality sales and marketing, specializing in innovative strategies to generate revenue in the tourism industry. He also has 16 years of experience in advertising. He has served as vice president of marketing for Tapatio Springs Resort and Conference Center; director of sales for Del Lago Hotel and Resort in Montgomery; the Radisson Hotel in Visalia, California; the Sheraton Hotel in Newport Beach, California; the Hershey Hotel in Corpus Christi; and La Mansion Del Rio in San Antonio.

SAN ANTONIO Convention & Visitors Bureau has made **four director-level appointments** — two existing staff and two new hires — as a result of a year-long reorganization aimed at realigning the agency's strengths and resources.

SACVB staff members **Frances Ortiz Schultschik** and **Dee Dee Poteete**, each with 25 years of related public relations experience, are taking on new roles.

Ortiz Schultschik is the new Director of Strategic Initiatives/Public Relations for Mexico/Latin America. Her experience includes serving as Director of Public Relations and Director of Tourism & Marketing for the SACVB.

Poteete, who has led the agency's public relations team for 14 years, is the CVB's new director of communications.

Dorah Putney joins the CVB as the Director of Tourism to help increase tourist visitation numbers and dollars spent in San Antonio.

Sandy Smith joins the SACVB as Director of Marketing.

SACVB also plans to launch a new branding image.

ARLINGTON CVB leader Linda Howell DiMario has resigned from her position. Her last day is set for Dec. 31, though she plans to continue serving as a consultant in the industry. A search committee plans to have a new CEO in place before DiMario leaves.

DAPHNE ADKINS, who has promoted Texas tourism for the past 18 years as owner and operator of Daphne's Tour & Travel, has been named the **new supervisor for Texas Department of Transportation's Texas Travel Information Center in Amarillo**.

Adkins has worked to bring group tours to Texas and, in the process, has worked closely with attractions, hotels, restaurants and city convention and visitors bureaus across the state.

She is a member of the Amarillo Convention and Visitor Council and Amarillo Chamber of Commerce; is a certified trainer for the Texas Hospitality Program; and teaches classes in hospitality to hotel staff, wait staff and various frontline employees, as well as tourism majors at Amarillo College.

Adkins fills the vacancy left by Rosemary Eaves, who served as the Amarillo center's supervisor for 26 years until retiring in July. Travel counselors Teresa Carney and Margie Faulkner have been managing the center since July.

DR. GARY GIBBS, who has served as the director of education and outreach for the Houston Grand Opera since 1991, is the **new executive director for the Texas Commission on the Arts**.

"Dr. Gibbs is a well-respected leader in the arts community. His passion and vision will be a great asset to the Commission and will help us continue to elevate the profile of the arts in Texas," says Victoria Lightman, TCA commission chairwoman. "We have already witnessed Dr. Gibbs' ability to bring a fresh new perspective to the agency, and we anticipate strategic advances under his leadership."

CORPUS CHRISTI Convention and Visitors Bureau has some personnel changes, including **Amie Hacker**, who is the new communications manager for the agency. She previously served as premium seats and marketing manager for American Bank Center.

Felipe Cantu moved from account

PRIZE PUBLICATIONS



LIPSCOMB UNDERNEATH A BIG OLD TEXAS SKY
BY SHERRY BUCKLEY PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY DITE

A feature on Lipscomb earned Texas Highways an award for art direction.

TEXAS HIGHWAYS and **Texas Parks and Wildlife** magazines netted many awards from the annual **International Regional Magazine Association**, held from **Oct. 5-10** in Lone Wolf, Okla.

"Winning any IRMA award is always an honor," say Texas Highways publisher Kathy Murphy. "It's a tribute to the magazine staff who bring their love of Texas to each issue they produce."

Texas Highways received the following:

- **Silver: Historical Feature** — *Carhops, Curb Service and the Pig Sandwich: Drive-In Texas*, by Michael Karl Witzel, Oct. 2006
- **Bronze: Travel Feature** — *Baffin Bay: The Tourist Trap That Wasn't, The Peaceful Paradise That is*, Helen Bryant, March 2006
- **Bronze: Art Direction of a Single Story** — *Lipscomb: Underneath a Big Old Texas Sky*, Jane Wu, June 2006

Texas Parks and Wildlife received the following:

- **Gold: Special Focus** — *Wetlands*, Robert Macias, July 2006
- **Gold: Cover** — August 2006, Mark Mahorsky
- **Silver: Public Issues** — *Rita's Wakeup Call*, Joe Nick Patoski, July 2006
- **Silver: Reader Service Article** — *50 Reasons to Get Outside*, Christine Maxa, May 2006,
- **Silver: Art Direction of a Single Story** — *Sky Trek*, Mark Mahorsky, May 2006
- **Bronze: Illustration** — *Deer Myths*, Chet Phillips, October 2006
- **Bronze: Department** — *Legend, Lore & Legacy*, Robert Macias, Randy Brudnicki, Mark Mahorsky, Andres Carrasco, Charles Lorhmann, January, April and December 2006

For more information on the magazines, visit www.texashighways.com or www.tpwmagazine.com.

executive with the San Antonio CVB to convention sales manager with the CCCVB.

IN THE PRESS

TEXAS' SAN BERNARD National Wildlife Refuge drew attention from **Coastal Living** magazine, which selected this major habitat for migrating birds as one of the **10 choice spots for taking in a secluded coastal hike**. The selections — from British Columbia on the west coast to Newfoundland on the east — were places where the coast is visible from a hiker's vantage point.

This mid-coast location's Cow

Trap Trail — about 70 miles south of Houston — offers a close view of wildlife (watch out for gators sunning on the banks of Moccasin Pond), lets hikers travel from a high to low marsh on a 1.5 mile levee, and gives them opportunities to see flocks of ibis and other wading birds.

Other coastal hikes selected included spots in Lighthouse Park in British Columbia, Redwood National Park in California and Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan.

For information on the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, call 979/964-3639 or visit www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/texasmidcoast/index.htm.

TEXAS TRIVIA

Which city in the South Plains of the Texas Panhandle is also known as the "City of Mosaics"?

Levelland has earned the title thanks to the many mosaics that can be found around town. The colorful mosaic show-cases can be found on buildings and walls on the South Plains Col-lege Campus, Covenant Hospital, Levelland Clinic, the Hockley County Library on Courthouse Square, the Chamber of Commerce building, businesses and more. Most tell a story of the city's his-tory or depict the essence of the city. Art professors from South Plains College created the first mosaic on the exterior of the Fine Arts Building during the early years of the college. Several more have been added throughout the town since.

TEXAS TRIVIA

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TEXAS TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS

VISITOR NUMBERS as of September 30, 2007

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year-to-Date Visitors	Percent Variation*
AMARILLO	8,692	-11.76	84,055	-4.36
ANTHONY	12,418	-14.28	114,518	-28.37
CAPITOL	7,047	+20.34	76,047	+6.34
DENISON	33,579	-7.24	381,367	-0.72
GAINESVILLE	46,484	+40.74	409,990	+8.06
LANGTRY	4,235	-5.76	53,213	+0.46
LAREDO	10,778	-11.70	111,291	+4.03
ORANGE	35,173	-6.52	434,692	+0.01
TEXARKANA	31,052	-21.25	370,042	-5.53
VALLEY	7,195	-21.29	163,745	+5.59
WASKOM	36,321	-16.26	425,956	+0.61
WICHITA FALLS	13,522	-12.58	148,518	+0.02
CENTER TOTALS	246,496	-5.62	2,773,434	-0.81

*Compared to last year

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

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