

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

INSIDE:

- ★ U.S. Wind and Water Open brings extreme water sports challenges to Corpus Christi
- ★ Retrospective celebrates HemisFair, San Antonio's introduction to the world
- ★ El Paso library explores women in Picasso's art

TRAVEL NEWS

THE LATE **Howard Rosser** helped put a spotlight on East Texas, and **Mary Ramos** plans to keep that light shining. Ramos recently purchased the **Longview-based East Texas Tourism Association**, a business established by Rosser.

After 45 years of being operated by the Rosser family — Howard; his wife, Kathryn Rosser; and daughters Leslie Rosser and Belinda Rosser-Gunckel — the tourism group has established a solid foundation and reputation in Texas and across the country that Ramos says she plans to build upon.

Ramos told the *Longview News-Journal*, "It's quite an honor to have this opportunity to carry on the tradition. Howard Rosser is a true pioneer for tourism with big shoes to fill. Not only was he a great friend, but a true professional."

Kathryn, who has served as executive director of the association since her husband's death in April 2007, says the organization is one of the oldest regional non-tax supported tourist associations in the United States. It is supported by its membership, she says.

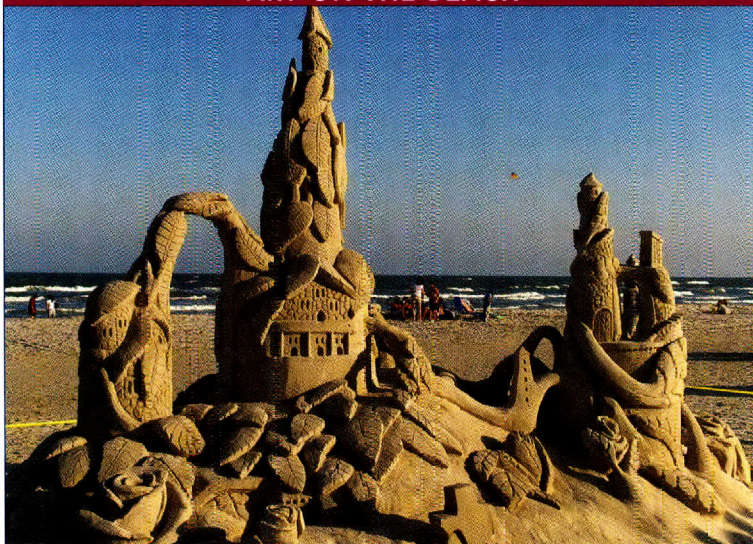
"We are confident Mary Ramos will continue our family's work in promoting regional tourism in the same spirit as its founder," Kathryn says.

Kathryn and Belinda will continue to serve in an advisory capacity. Leslie will continue her role as director of sales.

Ramos brings more than 20 years of radio management and marketing and promotional experience.

Most pressing in her new role is getting the association's group tour manual to the printer and planning for the May East Texas Tourism Conference in Marshall. Beyond that, she says, "I plan to continue doing what they've done so well, and try out some new ideas and expand things." She hopes to enhance the group's Internet

ART ON THE BEACH



Master sculptors from across the nation will converge on Port Aransas to compete as part of the 3-day Texas SandFest. COURTESY OF PORT ARANSAS CVB

TRUE TO Texas protocol, everything's bigger and better — so goes the **12th annual Texas Sand Sculpture Festival**, the largest master sand competition in the U.S. set for **April 18–20** on the beach at **Port Aransas on Mustang Island**.

This free, three-day festival is growing bigger every year with events like sand sculpting lessons and five sand contests, including those for youth, amateur, pro-am, masters solo and masters duo-team divisions.

So far, 22 master sculptors from across the nation have signed up to

participate in the competition. There also will be more than 200 amateur sculptors creating sand art.

While the competition is underway, onlookers can also enjoy a photo contest, free music, entertainment and other activities. Vending booths, featuring jewelry, art, games, crafts and food will be set up.

New this year, special carts will be available for onlookers needing assistance in viewing the sculptures.

For more information, call (800) 45-COAST or visit www.texassandfest.com or www.portaransas.org.

presence and add more focus on promoting East Texas to retirees.

Ramos says she also hopes to work more with the region's smaller communities and chambers of commerce to support their efforts to attract visitors through brochures and marketing efforts.

SIXTEEN years, \$77 million in donations and one recycled events center later, **Austin's Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts** is **officially open**.

In March, the center hosted a public open house weekend with free performances and tours to introduce the community to the new facility, which includes the 2,400-seat Michael and Susan Dell Hall and the Debra and Kevin Rollins Studio that will be home for regional artists and community art groups.

Long Center Programing Director Tammie Ward says the building was completed on time and on budget. It was paid for by donations from across the city and state, hence all the names that grace the

bricks and tiles in the building.

This unique center also arose from the rubble of the 1959 Palmer Auditorium that had been there. About 65 percent of the Palmer was reused in the Long Center. Most notably, the original dome tiles now don the Center's exterior and accent the interior.

A "sky ring" that was the original base for the Palmer Auditorium's dome remains as an architectural perk for the City Terrace outdoor space, conducive to performances and picnics.

Architect Stan Haas says it's really just common sense to reuse the former events center to create this new space. "It's about creating a sense of place," Haas told the *Austin American-Statesman*. "For a new building to instantly have a sense of place is very challenging. But the Long Center will open with its history in place right from the beginning."

For more information on the Long Center, call (512) 457-5100 or visit www.thelongcenter.org.

THE **DENTON County African-American Museum** made its **debut** on Feb. 16 in the **Historical Park of Denton County**, joining the Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum and the Bayless-Selby House Museum.

The museum is housed in an original Quakertown house that was restored under the guidance of the Historical Park of Denton County Foundation board.

Dr. Georgia Caraway, executive director of the Denton County Museums, says "The building of this museum touched the lives of many people in Denton County, including everyone from third-grade students to senior citizens. This was a total county effort." The museum was funded through donations.

Exhibits include items related to the historical African-American families of Denton County, the



This GPS Ranger device — featuring audio and video — is Austin's latest tool for touring the town. COURTESY OF AUSTIN CVB

Quakertown experience, and the collection of Dr. Edwin D. Moten, Denton's first African-American doctor.

"The main theme of the museum is the strength of the African-American community in Denton County from the time that the slaves first arrived in the 1840s until the integration of the schools in the 1960s," says Kim Cupit, curator of Collections for the Denton County Museums.

"We're really excited about the museum and its opening. We have worked hard on it and the artifacts that will go into it," says Ruby Cole, Southeast Denton Advisory Committee member for the Denton County African-American Museum. Cole once lived in the house with family members while her father was in the service during World War II. "They've done a fantastic job in restoring it," she says.

The museum is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.dentoncounty.com.

THE AUSTIN Convention & Visitors Bureau has taken a technological leap with the introduction of a **Global Positioning System (GPS)** program to help visitors discover the Capital City. What's more, this **GPS video tour** is also offered in **American Sign Language**.

"With Austin's reputation as a hub for innovation and technology, we're proud to offer the cutting-edge GPS Ranger tour," says Bob Lander, president and CEO of Austin CVB.

The GPS Ranger, developed by Austin-based BarZ Adventures, introduces sightseers to the city's historical and cultural attractions with a walking tour piloted by GPS technology. The lightweight handheld device,

with a 4-inch screen, offers an audio and video tour to more than 24 points of interest, providing a comprehensive overview of Texas' capital.

Attractions highlighted on the tour include the Texas Capitol, Sixth Street, Zilker Park, Moonlight Towers and the Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge, along with the city's famed bats. Events and local flair (O. Henry Pun-Off, Spamarama and more) are also featured with narration on the "Keep Austin Weird" campaign. As visitors approach each point of interest, the GPS Ranger triggers location-based content, telling the story of the site or attraction utilizing audio narration and video components.

"The tour lends itself nicely to both leisure and business travelers, as visitors can explore the city at their own pace, on their own or with a group, stopping to learn more about the sites that pique their specific interests."

BarZ Adventures has launched GPS Ranger tours at national parks and zoos, but its partnership with the Austin CVB is its first with a destination marketing organization. The Austin tour is also the nation's first GPS tour available in American Sign Language, using a video guide who details the city's history and signature attractions in ASL.

Lander adds, "We are especially excited to offer the American Sign Language tour, which invites increased accessibility and helps us provide the best services and amenities possible for all visitors."

The GPS Ranger tour devices are available at the Austin Visitor Center at 209 E. Sixth Street

For more information, call (512) 478-0098 or visit austintexas.org.

IN THE PRESS

A RECENT *USA Today* article directs readers to the **top off-peak places** to visit this spring — places like Hawaii, where spring is its most quiet season, and Texas' own **San Antonio**.

Travelers willing to forego the typical spring hot spots, can save a bundle, the article reads. "Vibrant festivals and events, plus cheaper airfare, hotels, and vacation packages are guaranteed to make you glad you skipped traditional destinations in favor of new places."

"With temperatures in the 70s and 80s, spring is an ideal time to visit San Antonio — perfect for exploring the city's River Walk and eclectic neighborhoods. With three airlines adding flights to the city this spring, this year is a great time to go since new air service usually equals great airfare sales," the article says. It adds that April 18–27 is the perfect time to visit because the city is especially alive with Fiesta San Antonio events and River Walk parades. Cinco de Mayo and the Tejano Conjunto festivals in May are additional destination draws.

The article also recommends going to the city's visitor Web site — VisitSanAntonio.com — for more information and to sign up for discounts to popular attractions.

SPORTS TOURISM

MUSTANG ISLAND is about to have added amenities as a **coastal destination**, beginning with **Newport Dunes**, the **only seaside signature Arnold Palmer golf course and resort**. The 18-hole course is the first phase of an emerging 1,800-acre coastal resort community, which will ultimately bring residential villages, multiple hotels, a marina, tennis and beach clubs, two golf courses and additional premium amenities to Mustang Island, located on the south end of Port Aransas.

Newport Dunes is expected to be open to the public this summer.

"Newport Dunes is the most unique golf course design I have constructed because it is my first true ocean location, and it is designed in a Scottish style," says Palmer, whose company has designed more than 300 courses and clubs worldwide.

Palmer commented, "A golf course must be built for all golfers

and should be truly beautiful. There can be no gimmicks; every aspect of the course must serve the game of golf in the purest sense." According to Palmer, the Newport Dunes Golf Club should be challenging, but not overwhelming to golfers.

Newport Dunes Golf Club will set the tone for a new era of courses with its eco-friendly environment for native habitat and wildlife. More than 40,000 native ornamentals have been planted to provide color and appeal to the course. During the development of the project, 60 acres of native habitat within the course was re-created to specifically protect the nesting areas of migrating birds and is a no-pesticide application zone.

Newport Dunes, surrounded by the Gulf of Mexico and Corpus Christi Bay, plays to a par 72 while providing outstanding vistas and ornamental landscapes. Added Palmer, "The course is a hidden gem that is certainly going to draw some attention from local, regional and national golfers alike."

For more information, visit www.newportbeachandgolf.com.

THE U.S. BOWLING Congress voted and announced **its intentions to make the City of Arlington its headquarters** by late this year. It will join the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America, which has been headquartered in the city since 1972.

The USBC is the sport's governing body that provides programs and services to more than 2.6 million adult and youth members. The Bowling Proprietors' Association of America is a trade organization that represents the business interests of more than 3,400 bowling center owners worldwide.

Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck says the creation of an international bowling campus in the heart of the city's Entertainment District will provide the opportunity for Arlington to showcase amusement parks, professional baseball, football and now bowling to the world. "Arlington is a great community with an excellent quality of life," Cluck says. "The international bowling campus is a perfect compliment to our Entertainment District and the professional sports teams who have already made Arlington their home."

The proposed site of the new headquarters is just across from Six

HEMISFAIR 1968 REMEMBERED

ON APRIL 6, 1968, San Antonio invited the world to **HemisFair**, and the world came. Now, **40 years to the day**, the **University of Texas at San Antonio's Institute of Texan Cultures** will unveil a **retrospective exhibit**, *HemisFair 1968: San Antonio's Introduction to the World*.

The exhibit will feature photos, video and artifacts from the HemisFair, as well as a retrospective of '60s fashions, technological advances and national unrest (Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated just two days before). The exhibit will run through April 5, 2009.

That world fair was a celebration of the "Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas," and it showcased San Antonio as an emerging business and cultural center between the United States and the world. It was an event attended by more than 30 nations that set up their own exhibits and pavilions to

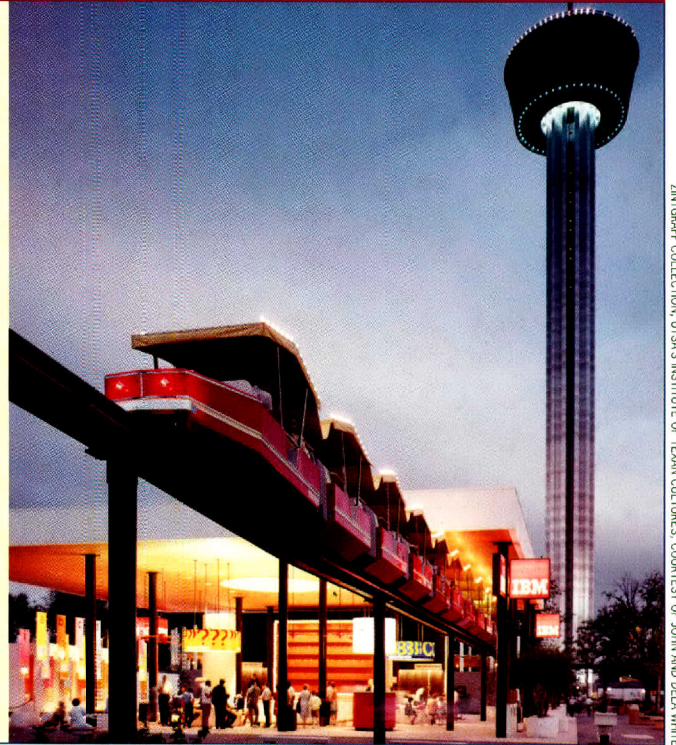
celebrate diversity and promote international unity.

Opening day of this retrospective will feature free admission to the exhibit, an afternoon commemorative ceremony and a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the exhibit. There also will be free elevator rides to the observation deck of The Tower of the Americas and the Instituto Cultural de México will offer free admission throughout the day.

The exhibit coincides with the 40th anniversary of the Institute of Texan Cultures, which established residence in the Texas State Exhibits pavilion for HemisFair in 1968.

For more information, call (210) 458-2330 or visit www.TexanCultures.com.

From the photo archives: A monorail zips through pavilions at the HemisFair in the shadow of the fair's theme structure, the Tower of the Americas.



ZINBARG COLLECTION, UTSA'S INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES. COURTESY OF JOHN AND DELA WHITE

Flags Over Texas and just east of the Rangers' Ballpark in Arlington and new Dallas Cowboys stadium.

USBC president Jeff Boje says, "We can set the foundation for tremendous growth and opportunities for decades to come."

THE 2008 U.S. Wind & Water Open (formerly known as the "Velocity Games") will kick off a weekend of **extreme water sport competitions**, an outdoor expo, live music, food and fun on **May 9** on the sands of **Corpus Christi's** newly renovated **McGee Beach**.

The new name helps to raise worldwide recognition for the competition as the premiere windsurfing, kiteboarding and extreme water sports competition held on U.S. shores. That, along with more than \$25,000 in cash and prizes, helps draw competitors from across the globe including Hawaii, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Germany and France.

This year, the USWWO will introduce a Saturday morning 5K run, which will serve as the official warm-up run for the 33rd Annual Beach to Bay Relay Marathon.

"This event highlights extreme and traditional water sports as well as skateboarding to fans around the world," Jessica Davila-Burnett, President of Epic Sports and Entertain-

ment LP, says. "What was known as the U.S. Windsurfing Regatta grew into the multi-sport Velocity Games and has now evolved into the U.S. Wind and Water Open, which features 21 years of the U.S. Windsurfing Regatta, eight years of the Kiteboarding Open, three years of The Port of Corpus Christi & F-2 Speed Challenge, and its first USWWO 5K sponsored by Fleet Feet."

EXHIBITS

CITY ON the Bayou: **Houston's History through Floods** is the latest exhibit at the **John C. Freeman Weather Museum** in Houston, the only such museum in the nation. The exhibit's April 22 launch day coincides with the museum's second birthday and Earth Day. That day will also be a free day at the museum.

The exhibition features vintage photographs of past historic Houston floods from the museum's collection and contemporary weather photographs taken by local photographers to demonstrate how weather, specifically the Houston-area bayous' propensity for flooding has shaped Houston's history and development as a community.

For more information, call (713) 529-3076 or visit www.weathermuseum.org.

THE JUDGE Marquez Branch of the **El Paso Public Library** is showcasing **Picasso's Women** through June 8, thanks to a loan from the **El Paso Museum of Art**.

The exhibit is meant to analyze the bond between his lovers and how they were represented on canvas.

This exhibition only represents a small portion of his lovers, but it highlights some of his more influential and long-term relationships. From these images, one can attain a sense of Picasso's personal perception of these women through specific attributes.

For more information, call (915) 591-3391.

INDUSTRY INSIDERS

AT NEXT month's annual **Texas Travel Counselors Conference** in **Beaumont**, there will be at least one notable **new face** — **Elizabeth Greer**. Greer recently joined the Travel Services Section of **Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Information Division**. The section coordinates TTCC, and Greer will be filling shoes left vacant by retiree Theresa Olson.

Greer comes from the Transportation Planning and Programming division, where she worked with the Geographic Information Systems

and learned about GPS data, which section director Brenda Harper says will come in handy with regard to Travel Services Section's highway conditions reporting and the Internet Voice Recognition projects.

Greer has also worked as a meeting planner for Sematech and has coordinated Web design and Internet marketing services for various CVBs.

"Elizabeth's experience with TPP and her meeting planning skills are the perfect combination for this position," Harper says.

Others taking on new roles include:

TERRY O'NEILL, Director of Corporate and Government Accounts, **Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau**.

JON BRADY, Web Marketing Manager, **Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau**.

LISA McCOWAN, Media Relations Manager, **Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau**.

RUTH ANN RUGG, Executive Director of the **Council of the Texas Association of Museums**.

MOLLY THORN, Senior Sales Manager, **Odessa Convention & Visitors Bureau**.

TEXAS TRIVIA

Which two rivers most help form the borders of Texas?

The Rio Grande forms the longest segment of Texas' 3,822-mile border with 1,254 miles that also create the international boundary between the United States and Mexico. The 726-mile stretch of the Red River forms much of the northern boundary between Texas and Oklahoma. The Gulf of Mexico helps establish the state's 624-mile coastal border.

TEXAS TRIVIA

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

EDITOR: Lois M. Rodriguez

DESIGN/LAYOUT: Kirsti Harms

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

TEXAS TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS

VISITOR NUMBERS as of February 29, 2008

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year-to-Date Visitors	Percent Variation*
AMARILLO	4,804	-16.71	10,522	-12.48
ANTHONY	12,186	-8.11	23,498	-8.28
CAPITOL	6,332	-16.31	11,520	-15.80
DENISON	31,990	+13.57	60,169	+3.79
GAINESVILLE	32,680	+23.36	79,774	+44.11
LANGTRY	5,384	-5.69	9,445	-10.43
LAREDO	11,822	+31.18	23,575	+11.81
ORANGE	40,128	-6.73	82,137	-8.21
TEXARKANA	12,758	-45.59	29,708	-45.36
VALLEY	35,501	+1.56	63,861	-5.85
WASKOM	29,886	-34.24	60,219	-30.60
WICHITA FALLS	12,081	+1.15	24,637	+12.01
CENTER TOTALS	235,552	-7.55	479,065	-7.29

*Compared to last year

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

www.traveltex.com • www.texashighways.com
www.txdot.gov • www.dontmesswithtexas.org

U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT
DEPOSITORY LIBRARY NO. 610

JUN 04 2008

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN
EDINBURG, TEXAS 78539-2999

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

TEXAS STATE DOCUMENT
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN
EDINBURG, TEXAS 78539-2999



TRAVEL INFORMATION DIVISION
P.O. BOX 149249
AUSTIN, TX 78714-9249