

# T E X A S Travel Log

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

## T x D O T

The **Amarillo Texas Travel Information Center** is back in business after completion of an extensive renovation and expansion project. Travel counselors moved from their temporary portable quarters into their almost-new facility the beginning of last month. With more than 500 travel professionals converging on Amarillo this month for **Travel Summit '95**, the TIC staff is gearing up for a special welcome during the prestigious four-day event. An informal reception is planned for September 27, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., right after the Summit adjourns. The first year the Amarillo TIC opened in 1968, counselors served 13,229 visitors. In 1994, the center averaged 14,115 visitors per month, with a total of 169,386 for the year. For more info, call the center at 806/335-1441. Or better yet, stop by for the grand tour.

**Further TIC updates:** TxDOT has acquired the Lillie Langtry Opera House across the road from the **Judge Roy Bean** TIC in Langtry. Plans include incorporating the opera house as a further attraction, expanding the center, updating the dioramas, and relandscaping to meet ADA regulations throughout the popular cactus garden. Construction of a new TIC in **Wichita Falls** is well under way. The new center could be ready for visitors as early as November. TxDOT has received authority to purchase a portion of the Blue Elbow wetlands as the site of a new center in **Orange**. Progress continues in **Anthony** on acquiring land necessary to build a new center on the Texas-New Mexico

state line. **Texarkana** and **Waskom** TICs are currently under construction in order to meet ADA requirements.

**Cheryl Cash** continued to migrate east when she took the reins as manager of the **Gainesville TIC** the first of this month. Cheryl began her career with the Travel and Information Division when she was hired as a travel counselor at the Judge Roy Bean TIC in 1972. Because of various opportunities, she resigned twice, only to return to Langtry, where she continued to tell Texas travelers "where to go." Cheryl began her pilgrimage east in August 1992, when she took over as manager of the Wichita Falls TIC. We wish her luck at her new post in Gainesville.

Thought we'd better squelch a rumor before things get out of hand. There's been talk that TxDOT is doing away with the popular **Texas State Travel Guide**. Editor **Mike Talley** received a letter pleading with us

to continue publishing the award-winning guide. And division director **Doris Howdeshell** has been approached several times at meetings statewide. Folks, it just ain't so. We at the Travel and Information Division are dedicated to increasing Texas travel by providing the most complete and accurate tourist information in the United States!

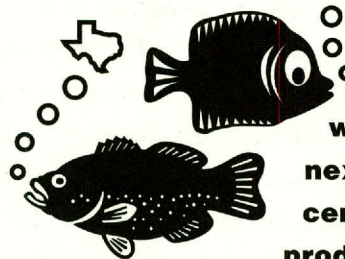
## T T I A

**J. Don Clark**, former director of TxDOT's Travel and Information Division, has been selected by the Texas travel industry to serve as president/CEO for the **Texas Nature Tourism Association**, an educational affiliate of the Texas Travel Industry Association. Formation of the nonprofit organization resulted from a statewide task force study with participants from TxDOT, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Department of Commerce, Texas A&M University, private industries, and individuals.

Clark said the new association will assist all areas of Texas in evaluating the potential for nature tourism and provide educational seminars, information, and guidance in developing these assets. Membership is open to individuals, organizations, and corporations interested in the preservation, use, and enjoyment of our natural resources, and expanded economic opportunities. For details, call 512/476-8760.

## COMING UP

There'll be more to see than steamboats when the **Clifton Steamboat Museum** in **Beaumont** opens within the next month or two. For certain, the 24,000-square-foot museum will spotlight the steamboat era. But other phases of history will be honored as well, including the Battle of San Jacinto, the Republic of Texas, the Civil War in Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf



**SPAWN LAKE** Texans can get a firsthand look at coastal marine conservation efforts, when **Sea Center Texas** in **Lake Jackson** opens next month. The \$13-million, world-class marine center will boast a hatchery with the capacity to produce 20 million fingerlings annually for release into Texas coastal waters. The center will showcase interpretive displays, two touch tanks, two 1,000-gallon aquariums, two 5,000-gallon aquariums, a 52,000-gallon aquarium, and a children's fishing pond. Daily tours will be offered and no admission will be charged. The project is sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Dow North America, and the Gulf Coast Conservation Association.

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

War. The museum will house timeless works by artists John James Audubon, William Jardine, Karl Bodmer and George Catlin as well as several bronze collections. Anchored on the museum grounds is the refurbished 1938 tugboat Hercules, now ready for tours. Inside, the museum will exhibit 40 ship models from the Texas Navy, Civil War battles, and the steamboat era. A 72-seat "SEE-MAX" theater, an art gallery, gift shop, meeting facilities, a restaurant, and Irish pub will complement the museum. At 7777 Fannett Road. Call 409/842-3326 for details.

The Dallas Morning News reports the 340-seat **Texas Instruments Founders IMAX Theater** is now under construction at **The Science Place** in Fair Park in **Dallas**. The Fair Park addition will include an atrium Hall of Science, classroom space, and a new entrance for The Science Place. The project is scheduled for completion by next spring.

PLACES

For the first time in decades, operation of the popular riverboat cruises on the **San Antonio River** changed hands. Beginning this month, **Yanaguana Cruises** will carry visitors along

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**ANTHONY TIC** Counselor Caroline Sanders and her husband's two-year-old gelding recently qualified for the All-American Futurity, the world's richest quarter horse race, scheduled for Labor Day in Ruidosa, New Mexico. Of the 180 two-year-olds who competed in the initial trials, Caroline's horse placed in the top 10, then went on to out-race the other nine by three and a half lengths. The winner of the prestigious race wins \$1.5 million!

**ORANGE TIC** Gobs of spiders! That's what a Holland couple had heard about Texas before their arrival at the Texas-Louisiana state line. Though they'd come as far as Orange on their way to South Padre Island, visions of tarantula-type monsters stalking the Texas byways and freeways were giving the couple second thoughts about their upcoming holiday. Counselor Becky Wilson said she "almost lost it" when the visitors said they had even con-

tacted experts in Holland about the wicked Texas mystique. But after a quick call to counselors at the Valley TIC, Becky sent the couple happily on their way.

**WASKOM TIC** Postmasters from Waskom and surrounding towns set up shop in the center last month to help celebrate 150 years of Texas statehood. Special cancellations were offered, and a local philatelist displayed both old and current stamps.

the scenic River Walk, one of the state's premier tourist attractions. The boats are fueled by compressed natural gas, which is better for the environment and offers a quieter ride. In addition, the new company now takes advance reservations for group charters. Dinner cruises can be arranged through the River Walk restaurant of your choice. To schedule a tour, call 210/244-5710 or 1-800-417-4139. You can FAX your request to 210/244-5740.

Memories of a small Central Texas town in the 1940s are captured at the latest tourist attraction in **Cameron**. Hometown boy **John Johnson** took 25 years to create his city in miniature. The small-scale model, built from images of the town remembered from Johnson's past, includes downtown Cameron, schools, neighborhoods, water towers, and bridges. The railroad, complete with a steam engine train and an elaborate sound system. Open to the public in the Main Street Market Antique Mall at 104 W. Main Street. Call 817/697-2047 for more info.

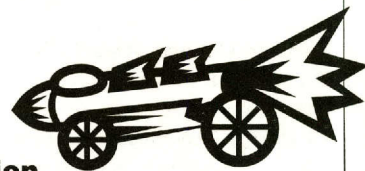
PUBLICATIONS

It's fall y'all. And to help you enjoy it, TxDOT editor **Marty Lange** has compiled another great edition of the **Texas**

**Events Calendar**, covering the months of September, October, and November. Thumbing through the calendar, it's easy to see what makes Texas such a special destination for native, U.S., and international travelers. With close to 2,000 listings, the fall calendar is chock-full of major fairs, festivals, Halloween celebrations, Diez y Seis fiestas, and Oktoberfests, all with music and food galore. The *Texas Events Calendar* is free for the asking by calling 1-800-452-9292.

The same folks who used to publish a hotel guide just for San Antonio recently expanded their publication to include Austin and surrounding areas. **Hotel Guide of San Antonio & Austin** includes accommodation directories, easy-to-read maps, a relocation section, and helpful articles and ads on tourist attractions and festivals. For your free copy, call 210/599-6163. Or stop by any of the Texas Travel Information Centers, where you can pick up the new guide.

**FUELING UP** Recent ground-breaking ceremonies marked the beginning of construction for Texas Motor Speedway, near Alliance Airport north of Fort Worth. Racetrack owner Bruton Smith along with some of the nation's top NASCAR race car drivers were on hand to help celebrate the \$75-million project. The first-class racing facility will include 160,000 seats, 205 VIP skybox suites, expansive parking, and giant video screens. Officials anticipate hosting at least one NASCAR Winston Cup racing date. Scheduled opening is sometime in 1996.



**T E X A S T I P**

Did you know that by simply dialing 512/463-5460 you can access information from the **Texas State Library in Austin**? The library's programs are designed to meet the needs of both government officials and private citizens. The Texas State Archives provide an ongoing record of the workings of Texas government. A Talking Book Program serves more than 25,000 visually and physically disabled citizens. Texans can learn about their families, their state, and their nation from the Information Services collections, and can access federal documents, national trade data, U.S. census information, and newspaper articles. The Texas State Electronic Library offers an Internet gateway to thousands of electronic resources from around the world, both directly and through local libraries.

**S T A T E P A R K S**

**Union Pacific Railroad** has agreed to a bargain sale, to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, of the 21-mile railroad corridor between **Mineral Wells** and **Weatherford**. TP&WD plans to convert the corridor into a hike, bike, and equestrian trail. Officials said the \$2-million project will cost the department only \$16,000. What a deal!

**W I L D L I F E**

Five-year-old gorillas Patrick and Jabari made their official public debut at the **Dallas Zoo's** two-acre Jake L. Hamon Gorilla Conservation Research Center, marking their return to the "wild." The pair arrived in January from the Metro Toronto Zoo, where they were hand raised by zoo keepers. Now, after a five-month introduction process, the young

primates have settled into their new home that replicates their native African habitat. For the first time they are part of a mixed troop of adult gorillas, as they would be in the wild. Gorillas, highly endangered in the wild, are part of a captive breeding program necessary as part of worldwide conservation efforts. For more info, call the Dallas Zoo at 214/670-6825. Open daily at 621 E. Clarendon Drive.

**H I S T O R Y**

Texas history buffs will want to stop by the **Capitol Complex Visitors Center** in **Austin**, where a special exhibition traces early events leading up to statehood. **Celebrating 150 Years of Texas Statehood: 1845-1995** addresses all major issues related to Texas becoming the

**? TEXAS TRIVIA**

**Which cities, other than Dallas, have hosted the State Fair of Texas?**

The first official State Fair was held in Corpus Christi in 1852. Houston, San Antonio, and Austin all had their turn, but with little long-range success. Then in 1886, two groups of Dallas business leaders formed two separate charters that, in that year, hosted two State Fairs, one of which was held in the east Dallas area of present-day Fair Park. With neither group earning a profit, the two charters merged to host a single fair in 1887. Since its Dallas beginnings, 109 years ago, the State Fair of Texas has grown to become one of the world's largest annual expositions, attracting millions of visitors each year. This year say "hi" to Big Tex, September 29 - October 22.

**TEXAS TRIVIA**



**MAKE NO CONCESSIONS**  
**Film lovers will have a chance to view more than 40 big-screen films at The Big Texas Ticket, Moody Gardens IMAX Film Festival in Galveston, September 9-24. The event takes place in concert with the International Space Theater Consortium, a worldwide association of big-screen filmmakers and theater managers. The Big Texas Ticket gives movie goers the opportunity to purchase special ticket packages that allow them to pick their five favorite films for only \$15. For details, call 1-800-582-4673.**

28th state on December 29, 1845, including annexation politics, slavery, and the Mexican War. Visitors can get a close-up look at the oldest surviving Lone Star flag, Sam Houston's pistol, the Texas Declaration of Independence, Mexican General Santa Anna's spurs, Bigfoot Wallace's buckskin jacket, the 1845 Texas State Constitution, and many more icons of Texas history. The Visitors Center is located in the 1856-57 General Land Office Building on the southeast corner of the Capitol grounds at 112 E. Eleventh Street. Included are a pictorial history of the Capitol renovation, gift shop, and a TxDOT Travel Information Center where visitors can pick up information about points of interest in the Capitol, Austin, and entire state. Call 512/305-8400.

**M U S E U M S**

In its fifth collaboration with the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**, has organized an

important exhibition of work by the great 17th Century French painter Nicolas Poussin. **Poussin: Works on Paper, Drawings from the Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II** features 65 magnificent drawings, never before exhibited as a group in the United States. Poussin is known for his dramatic and heroic works based on historical, biblical, and mythological subjects. On view through November 12 at 1001 Bissonnet. Call 713/639-7300.

**Fat Men and Little Boys: Bombing in World War II** opens September 30 at **The American Airpower Heritage Museum in Midland**. The exhibit marks the completion of a five-phase program, establishing the core of permanent exhibits commemorating the air war during WWII. This latest addition will bring to life the stories of 1945, when combat on two fronts came to a close. Open daily at Midland International Airport. Call 915/567-3009 for details.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
<b>Amarillo</b>	14,952	-6.47	93,981	-19.58
<b>Anthony</b>	12,177	-7.37	121,392	-16.49
<b>Denison</b>	20,928	**	177,222	**
<b>Gainesville</b>	28,605	-9.69	268,701	-13.99
<b>Langtry</b>	6,474	+12.81	80,229	+13.02
<b>Laredo</b>	9,678	-45.38	87,600	-19.43
<b>Orange</b>	55,338	+8.84	435,801	+7.08
<b>Texarkana</b>	48,027	-14.00	441,882	+14.30
<b>Valley</b>	15,894	+8.21	237,285	-.08
<b>Waskom</b>	45,609	-4.00	400,821	+7.16
<b>Wichita Falls</b>	19,011	-.14	149,427	+1.16
<b>Capitol Complex</b>	8,487	-38.96	90,876	-16.55
<b>1-800 Phone Center</b>	19,005	+12.64	161,946	+42.32
<b>CENTER TOTALS</b>	304,185	+30	2,747,163	+8.49

Data as of August 31, 1995

\*Compared to last year

\*\* The Denison TIC was temporarily closed in 1990 due to highway construction; resumed operation September 13, 1994.

MAIL SERVICES	This Mo.	Y-T-D
	85,329	1,108,442
<b>SERVICES TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY</b>		
<b>TxDOT TRAX System</b>	<b>This Mo.</b>	<b>Y-T-D</b>
Subscriber inquiries	59	
Addresses offered	161,295	
Addresses transmitted	32,456	
Addresses transmitted		548,039
<b>OFFICIAL STATE TRAVEL MAGAZINE</b>		
<b>Texas Highways print run</b>		
This month		385,906
This month last year		397,187
This year-to-date		2,983,924
Last year-to-date		3,307,782

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-9 p.m. daily)

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED