

**U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT
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AUG 24 2000

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN

EDINBURG, TEXAS 78540-2200

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

TxDOT

Recognition Communications Inc. (RCI) of Dallas was once again awarded the contract to produce the official **Texas Accommodations Guide**.

The multiyear contract will afford RCI the ability to maintain continuity within the publication and with contacts in the hospitality industry. The slick four-color brochure will include separate listings for hotels/motels, bed and breakfast inns and guest ranches, making it easy for Texas travelers to customize their business trips and vacations. The *Texas Accommodations Guide*, the *Texas State Travel Guide* and the *Texas Official Travel Map* are delivered as a standard packet to callers requesting Texas travel information and through TxDOT's 12 Texas Travel Information Centers. RCI is soliciting entries now for the 2001 edition. For details on accommodation listings and advertising call **Eric Kincaid** of RCI at 1-800-969-9896.

DreamWorks Productions

L.L.C. has requested permission to use TxDOT's **Wildflowers of Texas** folder as a set dressing in their upcoming motion picture, "Cast Away." The film is a dramatic comedy about the unusual adventure of Chuck, a Federal Express manager played by Tom Hanks. Look for the colorful brochure at a theater near you!

COMING UP

Cowboys, ranchers, tourism leaders and elected officials converged at the State Capitol in Austin in April to urge legislators to designate the **Chisholm Trail** as an

official state tourist destination. In 1968, 10 Texas Travel Trails were initiated through the Texas Legislature, and promoted by TxDOT's Travel Division. The Texas Historical Commission reintroduced the \$1.2 million program in 1998. *The Dallas Morning News* reports the delegation told the Texas House Committee on State, Federal and International Relations that the trail's rich history could provide an important element in the Texas tourism industry. **Doug Harman**, president and CEO of the Fort Worth C&VB, proposed the Chisholm be designated as the state's 11th official trail. The committee told proponents they will make recommendations, perhaps as early as November, on whether the Legislature should add the Chisholm Trail to the list.

Progress continues on the **Hobby Center for the Performing Arts**, a monumental steel, glass and limestone structure under construction in downtown **Houston**. When complete in 2002, the world-class entertainment venue will take its place as a corner-

stone of the Theater District. Plans include a cantilevered roof that sets off two theaters, a three-story lobby wrapped in jewel-like glass, and a second-floor terrace that embraces the downtown skyline. A separate structure for educational activities, rehearsal spaces and administrative offices will be connected by a walkway to the lobby. Officials envision the future of the building as the center of community life, attracting lovers of musical theater, dance, chamber music, opera, plays and musical concerts. For details, call the Houston Music Hall Foundation at 713/227-2001.

PLACES

On May 1, the **Amarillo Convention and Visitor Council** launched its largest regional tourism promotion to date. **DFW in Amarillo** reminds the folks from neighboring cities and communities they don't have to drive more than 300 miles to the *other* DFW for a fun-filled vacation. In Amarillo, "D" stands for Dillas, the city's championship minor

league baseball team; "F" stands for the new Firewater Water Park along I-40; and "W" stands for Wonderland Amusement Park, one of the state's finest theme parks. The campaign targets more than 1 million people in the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, southwestern Kansas and eastern New Mexico. DFW in Amarillo combines special room rates and lower admission fees to area attractions to offer a great family getaway at a reasonable price. For more info, call **Eric Miller** at 806/374-1497.

Feed your senses at **Clark Gardens**, just five miles east of **Mineral Wells**. The 83-acre botanical park, which opened to the public in April, showcases 30 acres of display gardens surrounded by trails through rugged landscape native to the region. The gardens are the dream of **Max and Billie Clark**, who were inspired to create their own Texas version of gardens seen in England. Today, the dream is about 70 percent complete. The work in progress employs principles of Xeriscape by using adapt-



BUSLOADS OF FUN Officials from the **Fort Worth C&VB** and **Fort Worth Transportation Authority** were joined in April by the area's tourism leaders to kick off a six-month trial run of the **Longhorn Trolley**.

The new service will link the city's key tourist attractions through September. Four trolleys carry visitors past the cultural district, Historic Stockyards and the Fort Worth Zoo, serving 24 stops every 20 minutes. If successful, the transportation initiative will continue past the six-month trial period.

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ed plants, minimizing lawns, utilizing compost and mulch, and conserving and collecting water. Open through July 2, Friday through Sunday; open August 31 through November 18, Thursday through Sunday. For a 2001 spring and fall schedule, call 940/682-4856. At 567 Maddux Road.

The old Katy Railroad corridor that once pumped life into a promising little city has become

Dallas' newest hike-and-bike trail.

The Dallas Morning News reports the opening of the first three-mile segment of the **Katy Trail** was celebrated last month with a 5-K run and walk. The 12.5-foot-wide track begins at Reverchon Park and winds along Turtle Creek Boulevard to Knox Street. A second phase will extend the trail north to Airline Road and south past the American Airlines Center. The trail was designed as a transportation link, to encourage its use not only as a recreational outlet but as a pathway to work, shops and other destinations that would otherwise require a car. Officials estimate more than 4,500 outdoor enthusiasts will use the Katy Trail each day.

Last May, **Tom Hicks**, owner of the Texas Rangers and the Dallas Stars, bought the **Mesquite Championship Rodeo**

TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel Division. Please send news items of interest to the Texas travel industry to Texas Travel Log, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Texas 78714-1009. (512) 486-5874, FAX (512) 486-5879. Deadline for each newsletter is the 20th of the month preceding the issue date.

Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Jane McNally, John Russell, Mike Talley

Layout: Jane Sharpe/Sharpe Design

TRAVEL TALES OVERHEARD

JUDGE ROY BEAN TIC

Maintenance tech Russell Haas recently rescued a visitor from an uninvited hitchhiker, who came donning a Zorro-like mask. After Russell noticed a long furry tail twitching from side to side from the bottom of the visitor's car radiator, he was able to coax the "bandit" back into the wild. The visitor explained he had seen a half-

grown raccoon at a roadside park, but never dreamed he would hop aboard for a free ride. The critter was last seen cresting a hill west of the Pecos River, in a land once reserved for thieves, card sharks and an unconventional justice of the peace.

WASKOM TIC The tornado that ripped through East Texas on

for \$10 million, plus its existing debt. This year, Hicks is putting his imprint on the tourist attraction and its 5,500-seat arena. *The Dallas Morning News* reports Southwest Sports Group Inc. (SSG), the holding company for Hicks' sports and entertainment businesses, has spent \$250,000 to spruce up the arena, signed a \$5 million naming-rights deal with Resistol, transferred television coverage from TNN to Fox Sports Net, and turned ticket sales and marketing over to the staff that handles the Rangers and Stars. SSG will take a major-league approach by integrating the rodeo into its current business philosophy: "Make sports and entertainment assets work harder, and work together, to increase sales."

The **Tarantula** excursion train resumed operation after a court order transferred control of the Metroplex attraction from **Coe Sun Inc.** to its owner **Tarantula Corporation**. *The Dallas Morning News* reports since Coe Sun began managing the vintage train in April 1999, the **Tarantula** has derailed twice. Officials with Tarantula Corporation maintain the accidents have tarnished the reputation of the train and could result in lost customers. They also accuse Coe Sun of falling short of \$400,000 in needed maintenance and repairs. Tarantula Corporation has discontinued reservations, special events,

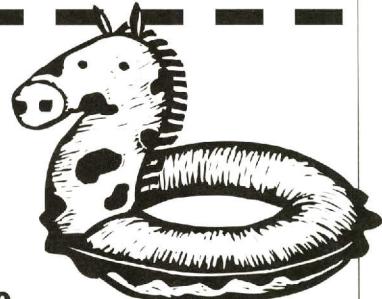
groups rates, charters and the dinner train, trimming its operation to include regular excursions for walk-up passengers only. The **Tarantula** departs from Grapevine for runs to the Fort Worth Stockyards at 10 a.m., Wednesday through Saturday, and at 1 p.m. on Sunday. The round-trip ride from the Stockyards to Eighth Avenue leaves at noon, Wednesday through Saturday, and at 3 p.m. on Sunday. For more info, call 817/763-8297.

Easter Sunday touched down beside the modern new center that opened to the public in October. Several trees came crashing onto the center's northeast side, cracking the roof and inside walls. No one was hurt, including the resident kitty that lives on the center grounds. Dedication ceremonies, planned for this month, have been postponed until sometime this fall.

When Anthony F. Lucas struck oil at Spindletop oil field south of Beaumont on January 10, 1901, a new age was born. The geyser blew a stream of oil more than 100 feet high. By the time the well was capped nine days later, the oil rush was on. To commemorate this momentous event, the **Spindletop Commission 2001** is sponsoring two years of activities surrounding the 100th anniversary year. Festivities began January 10, 2000, when the

MAKING A SPLASH

The German tower at Schlitterbahn Waterpark in New Braunfels is getting a major face-lift. The 60-foot-tall landmark structure will become the centerpiece of an addition designed to look like a medieval German castle. A new serpentine stretch of river rapids will wind down the hillside, replacing the four castle slides, which were Schlitterbahn's first rides when the park opened in 1979. The 550-foot-long, curving channel will connect with the existing Hillside Tube Chute, the country's first waterpark inner tube ride. Call 830/625-2351 for information.



Spindletop Commission and other dignitaries opened the New York Stock Exchange to signify the importance of the oil and petroleum industry and its importance to the economy of the nation. A reenactment of the Spindletop gusher will be staged on January 10, 2001, at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum on the campus of Lamar University in Beaumont. On January 10, 2002, an oral history project on the oil industry will be presented to the Tyrrell Historical Library. For a list of activities, call 409/839-2977.

A Central Texas river cruise company that has been in the vanguard of nature tourism in Texas for almost two decades has taken over the operation of **Longhorn Cavern State Historical Park** near Burnet. **Vanishing Texas Tours Inc.**, which operates Vanishing Texas River Cruise, will promote the park as a key element that helps make Burnet County one of the Highland Lakes' premier travel destinations. The cavern will be marketed along with nearby Inks Lake State Park, the Canyon of the Eagles Lodge & Nature Park and Vanishing Texas' nature and bald eagle tours. The group will advertise in newspapers and on radio and television, attend trade shows and create their own Web site linking the area's attractions. For cavern information, call 830/598-CAVE.

FACES

Scott Joslove began work as president and CEO of the **Texas Hotel & Motel Association** on April 17. Joslove previously served as chief of the Municipal Affairs Division for the Attorney General's office, where he provided legal and policy advice on workforce laws, sales tax, franchise taxes and other issues.

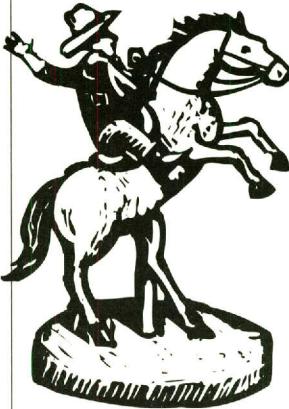
He also produced a series of publications and educational programs on the use of hotel occupancy tax, statutory resources for promoting tourism and local economic development

TEXAS
TRIVIA

**Which Texas
wrangler is known
as the father of
British aviation?**

For most of his life, Samuel Franklin Cody typified the legend of the American frontier. Born the son of a rancher in Burdette, Texas, in 1861, he excelled at riding, roping, and Western trail drives. In 1881 he took up working the Chisholm, Goodnight-Loving cattle drive, returning, riding and bronc busting, to the met and married Leila Daviss. The couple moved to Texas, but financial problems plagued actors the Atlantic to England, where joined a Wild West show, Leila impressed him so much that he invited her to London. The success, and featured plays penned by the man and playwright, Cody remained fascinated throughout his career as a warlike, show trial cook. At age 38 he began using his kit for meteorological research, and later developed a practical man-lifting kite and the first English dirigible. In 1908 he built a heavy-than-air flying machine, and flew a quarter mile in the first powered sustained flight in Britain. Over the next five years, he created a monoplane, a seaplane, and a biplane that was then the largest plane in existence. His work led to the formation of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps. In August 1913 his plane broke up in the air and crashed. Cody was buried in the airfield near London.

TRIVIA



BACK IN THE SADDLE

The Bandera C&VB reports things are hoppin' in the "Cowboy Capital of

the World.” The rodeo season began early this year, with Friday and Saturday events running from the end of April through Labor Day weekend. The

**Tuesday night rodeo began May 30
and continues through August 8. Local
and top-name country/Western entertain-
ment can be found most any day of the
week. For a complete schedule of events,
Bandera-style, call 1-800-364-3833.**

authority. Give him a call at 512/474-2996.

MEXICO
TRAVEL

For those heading to Mexico by way of El Paso, a **Tourist Information Center** awaits just inside Mexico off the toll-free Cordova International Bridge. **Lucia Cordova**, manager of the Anthony Texas Travel Information Center, said the Juárez facility, which has been open about a year, offers tourist-related services to those visiting the state of **Chihuahua**, as well as providing information on Mexico as a whole. Counselors wear uniforms similar to those donned by our own Texas ambassadors, speak Spanish and English and provide a Chihuahua state travel guide written in both languages. Lucia said she and the Chihuahuan center manager, **Arturo Quinonez Alfonzo**, have begun exchanging methods and information. Counselors

from both centers will work together to share ways of better serving travelers to the border region. Open daily 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (except for two or three hours in the afternoon for lunch and siesta). Call toll free from the U.S. at 1-888-654-0394; or from Mexico at 1-800-849-5200.

M U S E U M S

The Permian Basin Petroleum Museum in Midland received \$4.2 million in funding from TxDOT's Transportation Enhancement Program to help build a new transportation wing. The 17,000-square-foot addition will make way for an exhibit of Midland's collection of nationally acclaimed Chaparral race cars and will provide increased space for traveling exhibits and a larger auditorium. Construction should begin within a year, with completion scheduled for 2002. Open daily at 1500 I-20 West. Call 915/683-4403 for more info.

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Visitors Year-to-date	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	13,824	+9.85	56,058	+0.31
Anthony	10,542	+7.26	54,327	+5.46
Denison	26,349	+16.98	115,365	+18.89
Gainesville	29,748	-14.68	138,687	-8.99
Langtry	6,237	-17.37	41,946	-6.12
Laredo	6,384	-20.63	40,398	-5.86
Orange	46,149	+17.84	197,331	-6.18
Texarkana	46,176	+22.15	157,473	+2.23
Valley	13,431	+35.30	130,380	-36.12
Waskom	44,652	+19.95	189,285	+12.23
Wichita Falls	16,140	-15.50	76,275	-8.29
Capitol Complex	7,839	-16.30	39,603	-26.71
CENTER TOTALS	267,471	+7.86	1,237,128	-6.19

	This Mo.	Y-T-D
Mail Services	121,858	531,489
Literature Distributed at Trade Shows	0	0
Automated Attendant Road Condition Calls	4,789	93,004

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
www.texashighways.com
www.dontmesswithtexas.org

Data as of May 31, 2000

*Compared to last year

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