



TN

★
TO A
safer
2013

★
*Inspired employee resolutions capture
a bright promise for the year ahead.*

Letter from Phil Wilson

Executive Director

Since transportation is our business, some recent newspaper articles on the subject caught my eye. One was about the marriage between the auto and high-tech industries, and the offspring of that pairing that allows us to talk on the phone and get directions to the nearest movie from the comfort of our car.

Future gadgets will be even more "gee whiz." Car manufacturers are not content to let us drive; we must also be entertained while we do it. Vehicles of the future will let drivers access their favorite apps, search the Internet and command Apple's Siri to make a lunch appointment.

But far more futuristic than that, Google is testing driverless cars, vehicles that take today's smart cruise control and parking assist features to a new level. As one Google executive put it, "Driving cars is the most important thing that computers are going to do in the next 10 years."

Other factors are also changing the future of the transportation industry.

Today, more than 25 million people live in Texas. In a few years, our population could exceed 30 million. Some of our neighbors are making the switch to alternative fuel vehicles. If manufacturers have their way, this trend will continue to grow which will put a damper on the revenue we need to build the highways and bridges that every vehicle uses.

In spite of transportation's advances and uncertainties, we shouldn't fear what will happen. The future is simply a call to action to be better tomorrow than we are today.

Our call to action is to make 2013 safer for drivers and our employees. I've challenged the Occupational Safety Division to work with our districts, divisions, regions and offices to eliminate backing accidents.

In 2013, we're going to keep improving our processes and procedures so we can do our jobs better. This year, we're going to be even better stewards of our resources.

Also in 2013, we're going to keep tackling congestion in our metro areas and continue our dialogue with Texans, working with them to build a transportation network that is worthy of our state.

I'm looking forward to this new year and the opportunities it will bring us. Thanks for all your hard work this past year, and here's to a better 2013 for us all.



Phil Wilson
Executive Director



TN MAGAZINE JAN - FEB 2013

CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Bob Kaufman

EDITOR

Brent Dollar

MANAGING EDITOR

Jocelyn Sexton

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

Claudia Perez

FEATURE WRITERS

Rosemary Barnes
Phyllis Chandler-Gordon
Ann Hatchitt
Roman T. Hill

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Bill Powell
Jim Cotton
Sarah Parker
Michelle Releford

PHOTOGRAPHY

TxDOT and
GDC Marketing & Ideation

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

GDC Marketing & Ideation

PRINTED BY

TxDOT Print Services
Austin, TX

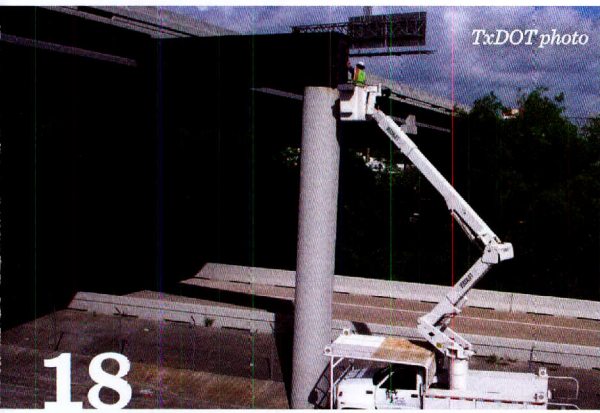
**TN IS PUBLISHED BY THE
TEXAS DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION**

125 E. 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701-2483

CONTACT TN EDITOR

Have questions or
comments about TN?
Email AskTxDOT@txdot.gov
and include "TN Editor"
in the subject line.

© Copyright 2013



18

6 SH 130 Full Speed Ahead

The tollway has opened to much fanfare, with drivers experiencing the highest speed limit in the nation.

13 2012 In Review... And a Preview of 2013

TN looks back at the big department stories of the past year and gives a glimpse of what we can expect for the upcoming year.

16 Cost Savings Across TxDOT

Administration, management and front-line employees all share in the responsibility to find cost savings, and the department has come a long way in using innovation to better use resources.

18 What to Expect When We're Inspecting

TxDOT bridge inspections involve a great attention to detail and a hard-working team that travels all over to get close to 1,800 fracture critical inspection points.

22 I Am An MPO Coordinator

TN sits down with West Region MPO Coordinator Joe Clark to discuss marshalling federal funding resources and helping out part-time with the NFL.

24 Employee Q&A

Corpus Christi Deputy District Engineer Chris Caron gives TN a moment of his time to talk about home, work and his New Year's resolution.



22



on the cover

Public Information Officer Deidrea Samuels of the Houston District shows her "Talk. Text. Crash." bracelet. Her resolution to continue inspiring and promoting changes in distracted driver behavior is one of the many safety-oriented resolutions TxDOT employees are making for the New Year.

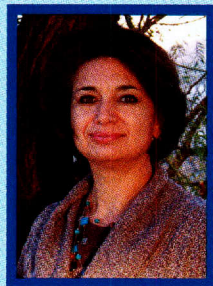
— TxDOT Team Members Chime In —

What is your New Year's resolution?



Amy Nieman
Business Services
Coordinator, Lubbock

"To learn how to use a sewing machine to make quilt piecing easier."



Lorena Soriano
Transportation
Specialist, El Paso

"To laugh more and worry less."



Jackie Benavides
District DBE Coordinator,
San Antonio

"To get all my digital pictures organized and create albums."

5 THINGS

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

1 Lauren Garduño is the new chief programs officer. He has been with TxDOT for 26 years, most recently as Abilene District engineer. Shannon Crum is the new director of the Research and Technology Implementation Office. She had served as director of data management in the Transportation Planning and Programming Division. Former Paris District Engineer Bobby Littlefield, a 28-year TxDOT veteran, is the new Waco District engineer.

2 The newest section of Toll 49 in Tyler opened in November. The six-mile Segment 3A connects SH 31 west of Tyler with SH 110 in Whitehouse and cuts commute time from 30 minutes to around 12 minutes.


3 *Texas Highways* was honored with five awards at the 2012 International Regional Magazine Association conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. The official travel magazine of Texas won a gold award in the culture feature category for "Roads to Freedom," a story on East Texas Freedom Colonies, and a silver award for its companion website, www.texashighways.com.

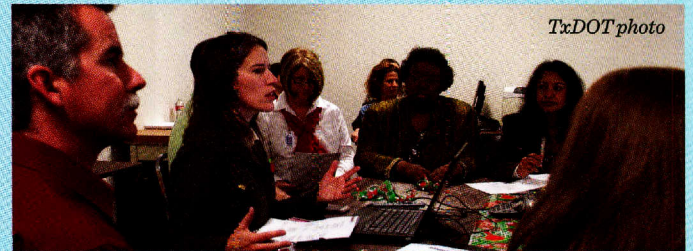
4 Ernest Rios of Dallas won a 2012 Ford Fusion Hybrid by entering the Drive Clean Across Texas online sweepstakes. Rios, a 19-year-old student, was presented with the keys to his new sedan by Dallas Cowboys cornerback Brandon Carr at the team's Valley Ranch headquarters in November.

5 Lady Bird Johnson was inducted into the Texas Transportation Hall of Honor at Texas A&M University Research Park in College Station in November. The former first lady was recognized for her vision and commitment to the beautification of roadsides throughout Texas and the nation.

EMPLOYEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

The TxDOT Employees Advisory Committee (EAC) continues to offer employees the opportunity to make suggestions and share ideas to make TxDOT even better. For 2013, the EAC has expanded from 15 to 21 members, and for the second year, focused on including members from all across the state. The EAC site serves as a one-stop shop for submitting suggestions electronically, reviewing responses to recent employee questions and catching up on EAC news.

Find the EAC site on the Crossroads home page under Quick Links at <http://crossroads/xrcads-eac/> or email suggestions to employeesadvisorycommittee@txdot.gov. 



TxDOT photo

Chair Jennifer Crosby leads the discussion with Employee Advisory Committee members. From left to right: Lowell Choate, Crosby, Susan Neumann, Audrey Thompson, Bessie Mayfield and Geetha Chandar.

2013 EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Jennifer Crosby, Chair
Office of the Chief People Officer

Lowell Choate, Vice Chair
Austin

Monica Aleman-Smoot
Compliance & Ethics

Michael Becker
General Services

Cindy Bordovsky-Stone
Technology Services

Marc Broadstock
Fort Worth

Geetha Chandar
Bridge

Tamara Cope
Brownwood

Petro Czeczinski
Houston

Eduardo DeLeon
Laredo

Julie Dickerson
Wichita Falls

Kathy Garrett
Toll Operations

Travis Hajek
Design

Michael LeViseur
Human Resources

Susan Neumann
Maintenance

Cynthia Northrop White
Communications

Laura Perez
Transportation Planning

Lynette Phillips
Beaumont

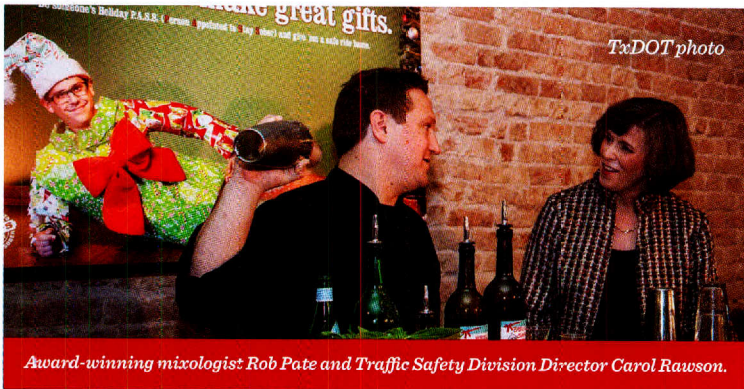
Deidrea Samuels
Communications

Tray Turner
Communications

Vickie Willis
Technology Services

STAYING SOBER for the SEASON

with *Holiday P.A.S.S.*



Award-winning mixologist Rob Pate and Traffic Safety Division Director Carol Rawson.

In early December, TxDOT held its Holiday P.A.S.S. (Person Appointed to Stay Sober) campaign to encourage Texans to give the gift of a sober ride.

"During the holidays, we spend a lot of time celebrating with friends, family and loved ones. Unfortunately, this is also the time of year when alcohol-related crashes increase. That's why we partnered with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Texas Hospitality Association to remind Texans to celebrate responsibly, use designated drivers and obey traffic laws," said John Barton, deputy executive director.

The message is particularly important because holiday drinking and driving poses a serious threat for all travelers on the roads. From Dec. 1, 2011 to Jan. 1, 2012, there were 2,462 alcohol-related traffic crashes in Texas in which 78 people were killed.


For its part during the campaign, DPS patrolled Texas roads to crack down on drunk driving and implemented no-refusal programs in several jurisdictions across the state.

To assist TxDOT in spreading the holiday message, the Texas Hospitality Association also distributed customizable sober driver "gift certificates."

"The certificates were designed so that people could offer their services as the sober driver on the dates the giver identified on the gift P.A.S.S.," said Carol Rawson, Traffic Safety Division director.

TxDOT also worked with award-winning mixologist Rob Pate, owner of P  ch   and Cherry Street restaurants in Austin, to create four signature non-alcoholic drinks.

"Too often, partiers make the designated driver the person who's had the least amount to drink, but that's not who you want driving you home. A designated driver is the person who's passed on all alcohol. That's why we asked Rob to develop these drinks, to give hosts some safe drink alternatives for the designated drivers at their parties," Rawson said.

The Holiday P.A.S.S. campaign ran through Jan. 1. 


CRASH

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR SAVING TIME, MONEY AND LIVES

TxDOT's Crash Reporting and Analysis for Safer Highways (CRASH) program was recently awarded the Francis B. Francois Award for Innovation from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

CRASH is an Internet-based application that allows law enforcement officials to electronically create and send crash reports to TxDOT. The department uses the data to improve road safety and maximize reporting efficiency, saving lives, time and taxpayer dollars.

The award, presented at the AASHTO Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, recognizes outstanding innovative programming implemented by a state transportation department.

Francois served as AASHTO executive director from 1980 to 1999. The association created the award in 2000 to honor his achievements and continue the legacy of innovation that he embodied. 

SH 130

FULL SPEED AHEAD



Texans can now zoom through Central Texas and bypass congestion on the I-35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio. State Highway 130, which begins north of Georgetown and runs 91 miles south to I-10 near Seguin, improves mobility, safety and accessibility for drivers. With an 85 mph speed limit in its new segments, SH 130 is the newest completed tollway in Central Texas and the fastest highway in the Western Hemisphere.

In 2011, the Texas Legislature gave TxDOT the authority to grant an unprecedented 85 mph speed limit to roads deemed safe enough to accommodate that speed. In August 2012, following engineering and traffic studies, the Texas Transportation Commission authorized the new speed limit.

The final two segments of the roadway — Segments 5 and 6 — opened Oct. 24, 2012, with attention given to its high speed. The new road starts at Mustang Ridge and travels through Travis, Caldwell and Guadalupe counties.

As an extension of Segments 1 through 4, which run from Georgetown to just south of Austin's airport, Segments 5 and 6 of SH 130 represent the effective use of comprehensive development agreements, where the private sector teams with TxDOT to build, operate and maintain highways.

TxDOT built and operates Segments 1 through 4 of SH 130, which opened between 2006 and 2008. Under terms of a TxDOT contract, the SH 130 Concession Company (CC) invested nearly \$1.4 billion into Segments 5 and 6 of the tollway and will operate and maintain the roadway for 50 years at no cost to the state and its taxpayers.


"SH 130 is an outstanding highway and a great example of how transportation solutions can be realized when government and the private sector work together on

behalf of all Texans," said Ted Houghton, chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission. "Commuters and business people traveling through Central Texas no longer have to deal with congestion, and best of all, taxpayers did not get the bill."

The tollway is the first of its kind in Texas to open under such a public-private arrangement, but several similar tollways are under construction in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Motorists can travel the entire 91 miles of toll road for about \$12 and bypass I-35 congestion between Seguin and Georgetown. On Segments 5 and 6, the base toll rate paid by TxTag customers for a light vehicle (such as a family car or pickup truck) is 15 cents per mile, or \$6.17 to travel the 41-mile length of the new segments of the roadway. Cars and trucks without a TxTag may also use the road and will receive a bill via TxDOT's pay-by-mail service. Segments 1 through 4 cost 11 cents per mile with a TxTag and have a speed limit of 80 mph.

Toll Operations Specialist Erica Ramirez said both TxDOT and SH 130 CC have put a lot of work into educating drivers in Central Texas about the new stress-free route around traffic congestion on I-35, between Austin and San Antonio. An advertising campaign for SH 130 encourages drivers to take advantage of the non-congested tollway with a quirky slogan asking, "Can you love a road?" Headlines on billboards say, "Roadmance is in the air," "End your relationship with bad traffic," and "Don't just hug the road. Embrace it."

"Whether it's TxDOT's 'stress-free driving' message or SH 130 CC's 'Can you love a road?' slogan, the goal with both campaigns is to let people know that they no longer have to sit, idling, on a congested highway when traveling between Austin and San Antonio," Ramirez said. "Also, with a TxTag, they can save money on all toll roads in Texas, as well as avoid unnecessary fines and fees." 

AROUND THE STATE

From the Panhandle to the Valley and all points in between, TN looks forward to bringing you transportation highlights happening throughout our great state.




TxDOT photo

Pictured from left to right are: Center Mayor Pro Tem Jim Forbes; Lufkin District Engineer Dennis Cooley; Center Mayor David Chadwick; Shelby County Judge Rick Campbell; State Rep. Wayne Christian; James Construction Group Project Contractor David Huckabay; Board President John Snider; Center Economic Development Corp.; and Area Engineer Michael Lee.

Loop 500 Extension Project Begins

TxDOT and the city of Center, along with state and local elected officials, marked the start of the long-awaited construction project to build the northeast section of Loop 500 in Center with a groundbreaking ceremony on Nov. 2, 2012. The project is designed to improve safety and mobility within the city and provide relief around the courthouse square for thru traffic.


The contractor, James Construction Group of Louisiana, officially began work on the project Nov. 1. This section runs from U.S. 96 north to SH 7 East and includes constructing a two-lane highway with paved shoulders, with at-grade crossings at intersections and a grade separation at the Timber Rock Railroad. At a cost of \$11.9 million, the project is expected to be completed in late summer 2014.

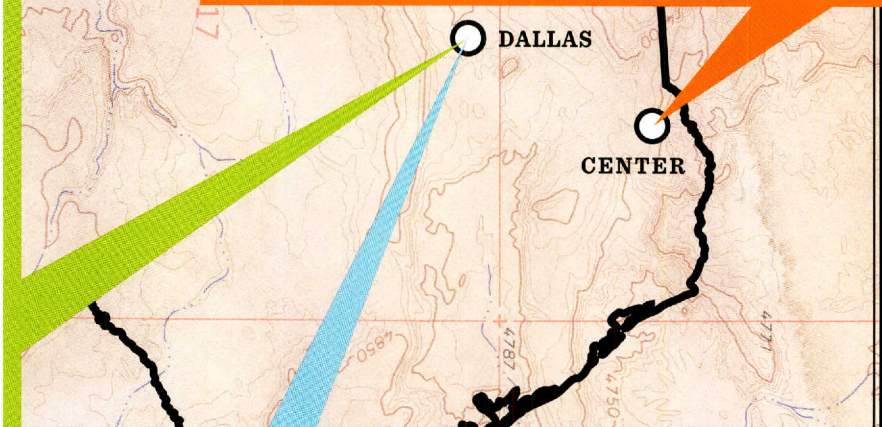
While U.S. 96 is an important hurricane evacuation route for Southeast Texas, it also serves, with U.S. 59, as a major north-south route for trucking in East Texas and carries a high percentage of truck traffic through the city of Center. The proposed facility will reduce traffic congestion and improve safety by providing large trucks, the traveling public and evacuation traffic more efficient access to U.S. 96 and other major highways currently only accessible through town. 

Horseshoe Project Picks Pegasus


Dallas residents will soon begin seeing improvements to one of the state's most congested areas thanks to a recent decision by the Texas Transportation Commission to select Pegasus Link LLC as the developer for the Horseshoe Project.

The project, dubbed the "Horseshoe" due to its U-shaped configuration, will include an upgrade of the I-30 bridge, part of the Mixmaster and both the north and southbound I-35E bridges near downtown Dallas. Highway segments of the Horseshoe are on the state's list of 100 Most Congested Roadways and among one of the most congested bottlenecks in the country with more than 450,000 vehicles a day. Through the design-build development approach and partnerships forged, TxDOT will be able to deliver the Horseshoe Project earlier than expected, while also addressing safety and traffic congestion.

Construction on the Horseshoe project is expected to begin this summer with a planned completion date of 2017. 



SH 114/Loop 12 Interchange Ribbon-Cutting

Executive Director Phil Wilson was an honored guest and speaker at State Rep. Linda Harper Brown's ribbon-cutting ceremony for the SH 114/Loop 12 interchange project at the University of Dallas in Irving on Oct. 31, 2012. Part of the Diamond Interchange project and let for \$224 million, it was the largest project in the Dallas District in the past four years. The project was built by the consortium of Zachry Construction Corp. and Mario Sinacola & Sons. It included widening Loop 12 to eight lanes and adding direct connect ramps from SH 114 to Loop 12 to improve traffic flow and increase capacity in that area. It also included managed lanes to open in the future on both highways. The three interchanges that are part of the Diamond Interchange surround the site of the former Texas Stadium. The stadium was imploded in 2009 and the site has been leased by TxDOT for mobilization of future projects in the area including the SH 183 (Airport Freeway) total reconstruction project. 



TxDOT photo

★
THE
TXDOT

RESOLUTION:

safety

★
AND MORE...

“After a good friend died in a car accident due to texting while driving, I developed a program about the dangers of distracted driving and presented it to every Houston District office and maintenance section. In 2013, I want to give my co-workers a chance to put their thumbprints on commitment cards to never talk or text while driving. I hope we can expand the program to the entire TxDOT family.”

Deidrea Samuels

Public Information Officer ★ Houston District




TxDOT employees across the state have set ambitious goals for 2013. Safety emerged as most often mentioned, with many employees concerned about the dangers of distracted driving. Engineers set goals to successfully complete new projects; maintenance workers want to learn new skills; and managers are working to create the best work environments for their employees. This cross section of the TxDOT workforce represents the department's mission to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas.



"My goals in 2013 are a continuous effort to lead by example through my work habits and personal values; provide excellent customer service to internal and external customers; communicate effectively to improve my job performance; and utilize training to be current about policies, procedures and the technology used by the department."

Kimberly Loche

East Regional Equipment Management Office Technician ★ Lufkin District



TxDOT photo

"I will continue to reassure customers who call us that we will handle issues as quickly as possible. I will observe our area roadways, record possible problem areas and report them to our staff. I also would like to make people more aware of the dangers of cell phone use while driving."

Kelly Medders
Mount Pleasant Maintenance Office Manager ★ Atlanta District

"As the new assistant area engineer in the Burnet Area Office, I want to make sure we get the best bids for our work; minimize impacts to the traveling public; and design all plans with safety in mind, so our inspectors and the contractor folks make it home every day."

Gathy Kratz

Transportation Engineer ★ Austin District

"My goal for 2013 is to learn to operate maintainers (front-end loaders), which level out the roadways. My supervisor selected me to attend maintainer training. Right now, I operate asphalt distributors. I've been at TxDOT only a year and half, and I really like my job."

David Franco

Maintenance Technician Robstown ★ Maintenance Office Corpus Christi District

"One of the fastest growing issues on our roads is distracted driving. As a TxDOT employee, a Texan and, most importantly, a mother, I pledge to stay off my cell phone while driving to set a good example for my children and to drive smart and friendly, the Texas way!"

Tracie Mendez

Traffic Safety Lead Worker ★ Traffic Operations Division

"We're proud of the progress we've made in the Dallas District on the Horseshoe and I-35 North. My goal for 2013 is to advance the I-35E/U.S. 67 Southern Gateway design to a 30 percent level and to complete schematic and environmental assessments for Loop 9 in Dallas County."

Moosa Saghian

Director of Transportation Planning and Development ★ Dallas District

"Our district has been hit hard with the Eagle Ford Shale traffic, and we have been developing new strategies and techniques. My goal is to implement as many strategies as possible to help our district with pavement management."

Rosa Trevino

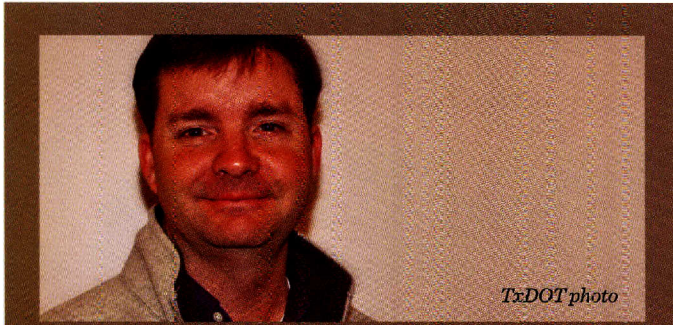
Director of Construction ★ Laredo District

Continued on page 10

“We plan to focus more heavily on meeting the needs of Texas companies that use privately-owned aircraft in their day-to-day businesses by providing a system of airports that meets all of their air transportation needs. These companies provide thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity for our state.”

Dave Fulton

Director ★ Aviation Division



TxDOT photo

“It was disheartening to learn that Nov. 7, 2012, marked the 12-year anniversary since we had a day without a fatality on Texas roadways. In 2013, I am going to work harder to encourage everyone here to focus on roadway safety and to share the safety message with our communities to obey traffic laws, eliminate distractions, improve child safety and drive more responsibility.”

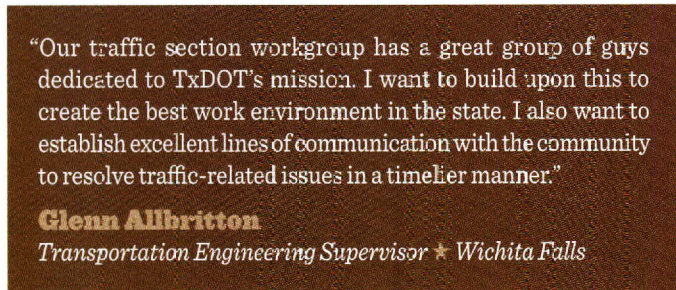
Lance Simmons

Director of Maintenance Operations ★ Atlanta District

“We have set goals for 2013 in the Travel Information Division to add 500 miles to the 9,000 miles maintained through Adopt-a-Highway. Texas Highways will work to add 10,000 subscribers and cross the 200,000 paid-circulation mark. We also will strive to increase revenue by 5 percent for the Texas State Travel Guide and Texas Highways.”

Margo Richards

Director ★ Travel Information Division



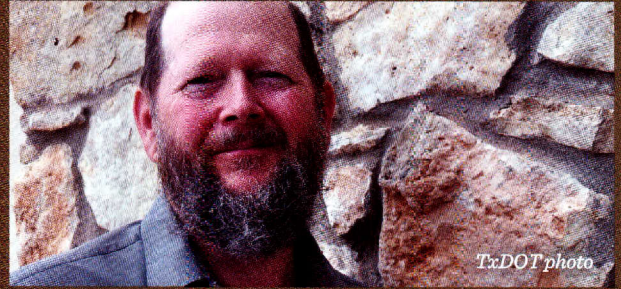
Glenn Allbritton

Transportation Engineering Supervisor ★ Wichita Falls

“My primary goal for 2013 would be updating the specifications book, which gives contractors the direction they need to complete projects in a timely and economical way. We are updating it to include all the innovations that have taken place since the 2004 version. Our spec book impacts every single one of TxDOT’s goals.”

Darren Hazlett

Deputy Director ★ Construction Division



TxDOT photo

“My 2013 goals include maintaining the injury-free status that our area has achieved since 1987 and continuing our twice-a-year Safety Summits. We also will focus on construction projects that impact safety for the traveling public, such as widening roadways and replacing narrow bridges.”

Gary Mizer

Munday Area Engineer ★ Childress District

“My top priority remains creating the safest work environment possible for all of our valued employees, striving for zero injuries and incidents in our Safety: Mission Zero program. The new performance measures for the districts will help quantify high standards in maintaining and improving our transportation system.”

Bobby Littlefield

District Engineer ★ Waco District



TxDOT photo

“My goal is to continue to develop a system where all recordkeepers in the Abilene District can support each other through shared data systems, collaborating to help each other become more of a team. I want Cassie Caudill, Rosalinda Sanchez and myself to be the best recordkeepers in TxDOT.”

Nancy Wilson

Construction Recordkeeper ★ Abilene District

“My goal is to improve safety on our construction projects by creating an accident review team on every large construction project consisting of TxDOT and contractor representatives. The team will review any contractor, TxDOT or third party accidents to determine what can be done to improve safety and eliminate incidents.”

Tom Hunter

Director of Construction ★ Lufkin District





TxDOT photo

“As the new access management coordinator in Lubbock, I coordinate with local government to help developers or residents plan access to their property. My goal is to ensure safe access solutions where businesses thrive and drivers are safe.”

Joni Hutson

Transportation Engineer ★ Lubbock District

“My goal for 2013 is to further integrate eForms and electronic document management systems to improve how the agency manages its business processes. This integration will allow us to better analyze, model, design, test and implement business processes and then capture the right measurements to ensure we become a best-in-class state agency.”

Cheryl Grant

Business Analyst ★ General Services Division

“I would like to increase the number of districts that take advantage of the services of the Collaborative Resolution Center. We know conflicts already exist, and we truly want to help employees involved in stressful situations. We also want to educate all TxDOT supervisors on how to properly and promptly address conflict at the earliest sign of trouble.”

Mike LeViseur

Collaborative Resolution Specialist ★ Human Resources Division

“My goal is to continue to educate all Bryan District employees about safety to the point that it is part of their everyday lives and culture 24 hours a day, seven days a week and they take safety home to their families to avoid any incidents. It is my job to show them this is achievable.”

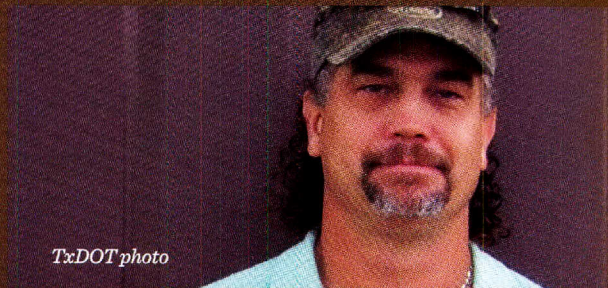
Kenny Cuevas

Safety Officer ★ Bryan District

“Next year, I will continue to lead the effort to streamline the ROW utility accommodation process to help complete projects on time and resolve congestion issues more quickly. I also will continue to develop collaborative relationships with our transportation partners and our impacted property owners.”

Charon Williams

Engineering Program Specialist ★ Right of Way Division



TxDOT photo

“My goal is to be more aggressive in reviewing and repairing roadway/right-of-way safety issues or concerns. I also will strive to have an open mind to work with all individuals and groups in order to achieve our department goals.”

Carl Schroeder

Maintenance Supervisor ★ Bryan District

“My goal for 2013 is to make TxDOT a safer workplace for all employees and also the traveling public. I am a part-time EMT with Archer City Ambulance, and I am very concerned about the use of cell phones and texting by drivers. My goal would be to stress to every driver the importance of focusing only on driving when behind the wheel.”

Mike Carriger

Archer Maintenance Section Technician ★ Wichita Falls District

“My number one priority is to get Compass, the new maintenance management system, running smoothly and efficiently. I want to help maintenance supervisors spend less time on the computer and more time benefiting from the system to monitor the roads for safety and maintenance needs.”

Brandye Munn

*Compass Project Manager ★ Maintenance Division **TN***

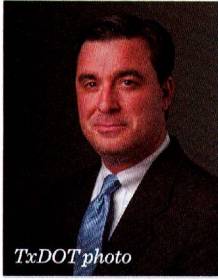
TALKTEXTCRASH

TxDOT launched the Talk.Text.Crash. outreach campaign in April 2012 to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and to encourage Texans to put down their cell phones when behind the wheel.

Distracted driving is becoming increasingly common and dangerous, causing traffic crashes and fatalities. It's estimated that nearly one in four crashes in Texas involves driver distraction.

TxDOT recently distributed thousands of orange wristbands and black thumb rings to employees statewide to serve as a daily reminder of the dangers of distracted driving.

Although cell phone use is the most easily recognized distraction, all in-vehicle distractions are unsafe and can cause crashes or fatalities. TxDOT calls on all Texans to focus on the road and wait until arriving at their destinations to conduct non-driving activities.



TxDOT photo

CHANGE ALL AROUND

A Preview of the Upcoming Legislative Session

By Senior State Legislative Representative Jerry Haddican

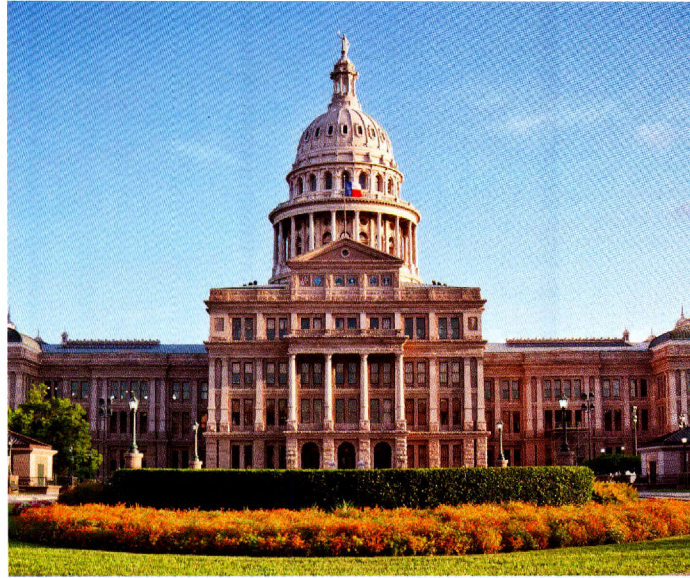
As the 83rd Texas Legislature convenes for its 140-day Regular Session, it is a good time for anyone who follows transportation policy to assess the political landscape at the Capitol.

While assessments differ, it appears that there will be at least three major themes that will shape the transportation policy discussions during the legislative session:

1. The Legislature has changed, so education is key.
2. TxDOT has worked hard to transform itself and continues to do so.
3. Many in the business community believe that Texas needs new sources of transportation funding to maintain its economic vitality.

Changes in the Legislature

Much has been made of the historically high turnover among members of the Texas Legislature. In fact, nearly half of the 150-member House of Representatives will be freshmen or sophomores, meaning there will be 67 House members with less than two years legislative experience.



In the 31-member Senate, six senators will not be returning. Three of those six senators were members of the Senate Committee on Transportation. Interestingly, the House Committee on Transportation was the only House committee that did not lose a single member due to retirement or election defeat. In light of the large number of new members, TxDOT's State Legislative Affairs Office has prepared a series of educational brochures for both new and returning legislators to explain many of the department's key functions.

Changes at TxDOT


Notwithstanding the turnover at the Capitol, many returning legislators have noticed the numerous changes at TxDOT

resulting from our internal modernization initiatives and successful implementation of our Sunset bill.

TxDOT Executive Director Phil Wilson, who spent much of the last year meeting with legislators both in Austin and in their districts, has emphasized those changes, increasing their visibility and positive effect. During the early days of the session, those changes will also drive much of the legislative discussion about the department, particularly with respect to improvements in our safety programs as well as our cost-saving measures. As new legislators learn more about TxDOT, they'll be able to see that we have diligently responded to legislative direction and that we are striving to be good stewards of transportation funding.

Threat to Economic Development

Concern is growing, particularly among some business groups, about the looming threat to the strength of the Texas economy unless a sustainable funding source is dedicated to transportation. Put simply, our state's growing transportation infrastructure needs have outstripped current funding sources. At the same time, there is broad recognition that, given the political climate, proposals to raise taxes are not realistic. As a result, it's not clear at this time that an acceptable proposal will emerge. If such a proposal does emerge, look for a series of passionate debates about the future of our state and the role that transportation infrastructure plays in that future.

Here at TxDOT, we must maintain our daily focus on our mission and values, regardless of any transportation discussions at the Capitol. In doing so, it is essential that we continue to be ready to serve as a resource for legislators as they make decisions about transportation policy. If you receive a call from a legislator or legislative staff on a legislative matter, please contact State Legislative Affairs Office immediately. 



REVIEWING 2012

GETTING READY

FOR 2013

Energized by a new leadership team, mission and goals, TxDOT celebrated major successes on all fronts in 2012. And 2013 promises to be another year of big wins, with numerous megaprojects designed to relieve congestion in metropolitan areas getting under way.

Executive Director Phil Wilson kicked off 2012 with numerous key leadership appointments, including Chief Planning and Project Officer Russell Zapalac, Chief Communications Officer Bob Kaufman, and Chief Strategy and Administration Officer Scott Leonard.

Wilson's team quickly articulated a new TxDOT mission: Work with others to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas. The team also refined the agency's goals to maintain a safe system, address congestion, connect Texas communities and become a best-in-class state agency.

The new mission statement underscores that safety is the department's top priority. Employees listened and responded. Fiscal year 2012 ended with the best safety numbers in the department's 95-year history, including the lowest number of injuries on record, lowest number of lost-time injuries in department archives and lowest number of lost-production days. The historic records are the best in the country among all state departments of transportation that report their rates.

The department joined with government and industry leaders to improve the state's transportation system by forming the Task Force on Texas' Energy Sector Roadway Needs and the Panama Canal Stakeholder Working Groups to study economic opportunities and address infrastructure concerns related to energy industry activities and increased traffic expected from the canal expansion. Also launched was a pay-by-mail system for Central Texas toll roads and a study to explore the option of passenger rail service between Oklahoma and South Texas.


High-priority projects across the state benefited from an additional \$2 billion in anticipated state and federal funding allocated by the Texas Transportation Commission earlier in the year. The department also continues working with partners to leverage more available funds and opportunities to address statewide connectivity needs.

To better communicate its mission with Texans, the Commission took its decision making on the road, conducting several monthly meetings outside of Austin in Corpus Christi, the Woodlands and Arlington. TxDOT also launched a new, revamped website, www.txdot.gov, that features user-friendly portals for three distinct audiences: drivers, businesses and government.

The final segments of the SH 130 toll road connecting Austin and San Antonio opened in October. The new segments represent years of planning and partnering to address congestion on I-35 in and around Austin.


Elsewhere in the state, planning and funding for I-69 Texas advanced; the expansion of I-35 made significant progress with five new projects breaking ground; the iconic Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi was illuminated with a state-of-the-art LED lighting system; Phase 4 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway in Lubbock and Segment 3A of Toll 49 in Tyler opened; the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in Dallas and the Phyllis J. Tilley Memorial Bridge in Fort Worth were dedicated; and the John W. Johnson, the newest vessel in the Galveston-Port Bolivar Ferry System, made its inaugural voyage.

This year, the long-anticipated DFW Connector will open in July, 11 months ahead of schedule. The 8.4-mile project along SH 114 and 121 will smooth out the "Grapevine Funnel" and add continuous frontage roads north of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. The \$1.1 billion project began in February 2010 and features 24 lanes, including four toll-managed lanes.

Also, several big projects are slated to break ground this year. They include the reconstruction of U.S. 290 between I-610 and SH 6 in Houston; the development of 37 miles of new toll road along SH 6 (Grand Parkway) in Harris and Montgomery counties; the expansion of I-35W near downtown Fort Worth; the Dallas Horseshoe Project to rebuild the I-30/I-35E exchange in downtown Dallas; and the I-35E expansion project from U.S. 380 to I-635 in Denton County. 

A MINUTE WITH...

Transportation Commissioner **JEFF AUSTIN III**



"On Thanksgiving Day last year, I had a chance to travel on the Johnny Johnson, Ray Stoker and Dewitt C. Greer ferries, and meet with our crews that spent time away from their families and loved ones to help travelers get to their destinations. The professionalism, loyalty and focus on safety from our employees was unparalleled. And it is through this type of dedication of our staff that we keep Texas moving on holidays and throughout the year. Thank you for doing what you do."

WORKING TOWARD A FATALITY-FREE DAY

TxDOT dedicates countless hours toward improving the safety of the traveling public. Lowering the state's traffic fatalities and injuries will continue to be a critical mission.

Twelve years ago, Nov. 7, 2000, was the last day there wasn't a fatality on Texas roadways. Since this date at least one person has died every single day on state roads. TxDOT is dedicated to changing this through forward-thinking safety programs, educational campaigns and innovative highway improvements.

Fatalities have been decreasing in Texas for several years — in 2001, the state had 3,739 traffic-related fatalities, declining to 3,048 by the end of 2011. Notable progress has been made, but even one traffic death in the state is too many.

The department manages various programs focused on improving safety as well as continuing to develop a culture around it. TxDOT creates a wide variety of public safety information, continues to improve work zone safety, incorporates safety planning into every aspect of construction and maintenance, and works closely with a wide range of transportation safety stakeholders.

One program is the Texas Traffic Safety Program, a federally funded effort that reduces the number of traffic fatalities through education, training and enforcement. TxDOT, the Texas Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement have a longstanding partnership with a common goal of protecting all drivers.

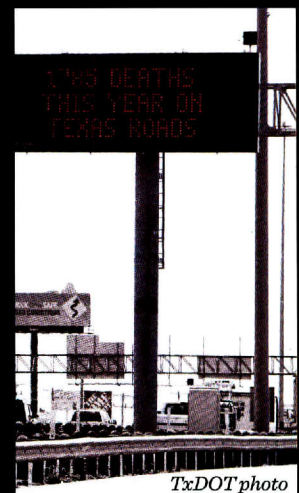
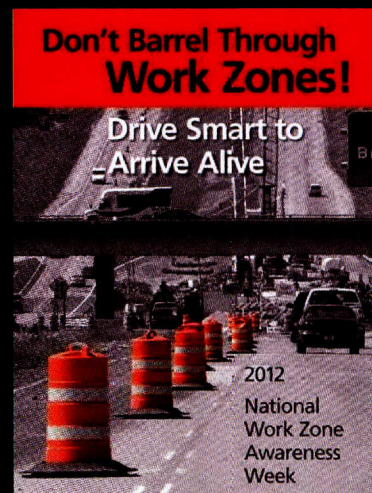
The program provides grants to state agencies, private non-profit associations and local jurisdictions for projects focusing on areas such as selective traffic enforcement, driving while intoxicated prevention, and roadway safety. It also provides extensive public information and enforcement efforts that have helped safety belt usage in Texas reach approximately 94 percent in 2012. Alcohol-related traffic fatalities between fiscal years 2011 and 2012 have decreased 13 percent.

In addition, TxDOT's Safety Bond Program develops projects on the state highway system. Since 2004, approximately \$1.2 billion has been used for roadway safety improvements. When all the projects are completed, TxDOT will have widened nearly 2,200

miles of narrow roads, added 276 left-turn lanes, built 33 highway interchanges and installed 1,030 miles of concrete and median barriers. These projects are expected to save many lives over the next 20 years.

Because a majority of traffic fatalities result from distracted driving, drinking and driving and not using seat belts, the department educates drivers through various seasonal campaigns that focus on safer driving, including Talk.Text.Crash., Motorcycle Safety, and Faces of Drunk Driving. TxDOT has also begun displaying the number of fatalities to date on dynamic message signs along Texas highways to remind drivers of the serious consequences of unsafe driving.

Although safety on our roads continues to improve, there is still a long way to go to save more lives. By utilizing all of these efforts, TxDOT is moving closer to another day with zero fatalities. **TN**



GASSING UP TO GET GREEN:

Compressed Natural Gas Pilot Program



Commissioner Bill Meadows

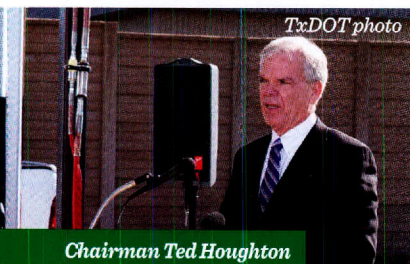
TxDOT photo

Last month, TxDOT launched a compressed natural gas (CNG) pilot program in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex acquiring four CNG trucks. An ozone nonattainment area, agency leaders are testing alternative fuel vehicles in the Metroplex to perform daily operations in an effort to improve air quality, increase efficiency and utilize the state's abundant natural gas resources.

With a large fleet of vehicles that travel thousands of miles, agency leaders sought efficient ways to do business while providing Texans with exceptional service. Adding the four CNG Ford F-250 trucks was an important, environmentally sensitive measure, and natural gas vehicles are reported to cost 40 percent less to refuel than gasoline-powered vehicles. "Today, the state's largest fleet operator is taking advantage of the state's largest natural resource," said Bill Meadows of Fort Worth, a Texas Transportation Commissioner, addressing the crowd at a Clean Energy fuel station in Irving.

Commission Chairman Ted Houghton commented the program is "another tool to clean up the air in various regions." Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston are five of the largest cities in the United States and compose a rapidly growing region named the Texas Triangle. Ten percent of the U.S. transportation sector travels through this area each year, according to America's Natural Gas Alliance. Locating the pilot program in the area was a thoughtful approach from TxDOT leaders.

Natural gas-powered vehicles are cleaner burning and emit up to 90 percent fewer greenhouse gases. The program exemplifies the agency's commitment to using the state's natural resources and reducing the nation's dependence on foreign oil by maintaining an alternative fuel vehicle fleet. 



Chairman Ted Houghton



TxDOT photo

Bright Lights: Rescues on our Roadways

Have you ever had a flat on a busy highway or engine trouble out in the middle of nowhere? Your bad luck would take a turn for the better if a TxDOT employee stopped to help.

A Roadside Savior

"Working for TxDOT, you are working for the public, and from the very first day, your supervisors tell you to stop if anyone needs help," said Engineering Technician Gerald Hatten in the Atlanta District. "It's in your heart to stop."

On a 100-degree day last August, Hatten was working and stopped to assist Larry Williams of Lone Star with a flat tire. Williams wrote to let TxDOT know how much he appreciated Hatten's efforts. His email became a feature in Bright Lights: Where Employees Shine on Crossroads.

"I want the Daingerfield Office to make sure Gerald Hatten's supervisor knows what a courteous, good employee he is. Gerald was a life saver on that day, and I really appreciated his dedication and good nature," Williams wrote.


Hatten marks 20 years with TxDOT on Feb. 1, 2013. "Stopping is who we are at TxDOT. It's part of the job."

A Rescue in Remote Stretches

Across the state along that lonely 112 mile-stretch of I-10 between Ozona and Fort Stockton, Rita Cuellar of New Braunfels had two small children in her car when she ran out of gas.

"They were getting pretty anxious waiting for a tow truck to come from Fort Stockton, which can take an hour or more," said Maintenance Technician Raymon Cedillo, who works out of the Ozona Maintenance Office in the San Angelo District. He got five gallons of gas out of his crew cab that he always carries for times like this, poured it into her tank and followed her to Fort Stockton.

"I didn't think anything of it until someone from the district office called me to say Ms. Cuellar wrote a thank you letter," said Cedillo. Cuellar's letter was included in Bright Lights as well.

Not every stranded motorist takes the time to write, but with thousands of TxDOT employees out in the field with the same attitude of service and dedication as Cedillo and Hatten, we know that many more motorists receive assistance. So thanks to all of the hard-working, tire-changing, gas-toting TxDOT employees who stop to help. 

In Bright Lights: Where Employees Shine on Crossroads, letters and emails of thanks are featured each week, and many of those are from motorists who received assistance when a TxDOT vehicle pulled up at the scene.

Read compliments sent to the department about other great TxDOT employees by reading Bright Lights on Crossroads. Spread the word and help keep this effort going by sending any compliments you receive to AskTxDOT, so we can shine Bright Lights on your achievements as well.

THE VALUE OF COST SAVINGS

and Being Accountable for Cost Solutions

As a state agency largely funded through tax dollars, one way TxDOT works with others to provide transportation solutions is by operating efficiently and finding cost savings whenever possible.

As a state agency largely funded through tax dollars, TxDOT works to provide transportation solutions by operating efficiently and finding cost savings whenever possible. TxDOT has recently begun a new program to centrally identify and capture cost savings. The process of tracking efficiencies and their related cost savings allows the agency to better share information and duplicate good ideas across the organization.

In a high-performing organization, all employees are empowered to generate cost saving ideas; for TxDOT's continued success, it is critical that savings opportunities are identified not only at the top, but also by front-line employees. By researching similar entity best practices and by consistently revisiting and understanding our customer requirements, employees at all levels can unearth opportunities for cost savings.

Pinpointing the exact amount of cost savings is a key first step. So far, more than \$250 million has been identified and captured in cost savings and avoidances. These numbers will be reported to the Texas Transportation Commission and Administration on a quarterly basis, including a list of both identified and captured cost savings. This information will also be used to communicate TxDOT's proactive, continuous improvement efforts to the Legislature and public stakeholders.

Soon, a Cost Savings Tracker, as well as corresponding cost saving case studies, will be published internally via the Operational Excellence Crossroads site, as well as the TxDOT website.

Finding Ways to Reduce Costs

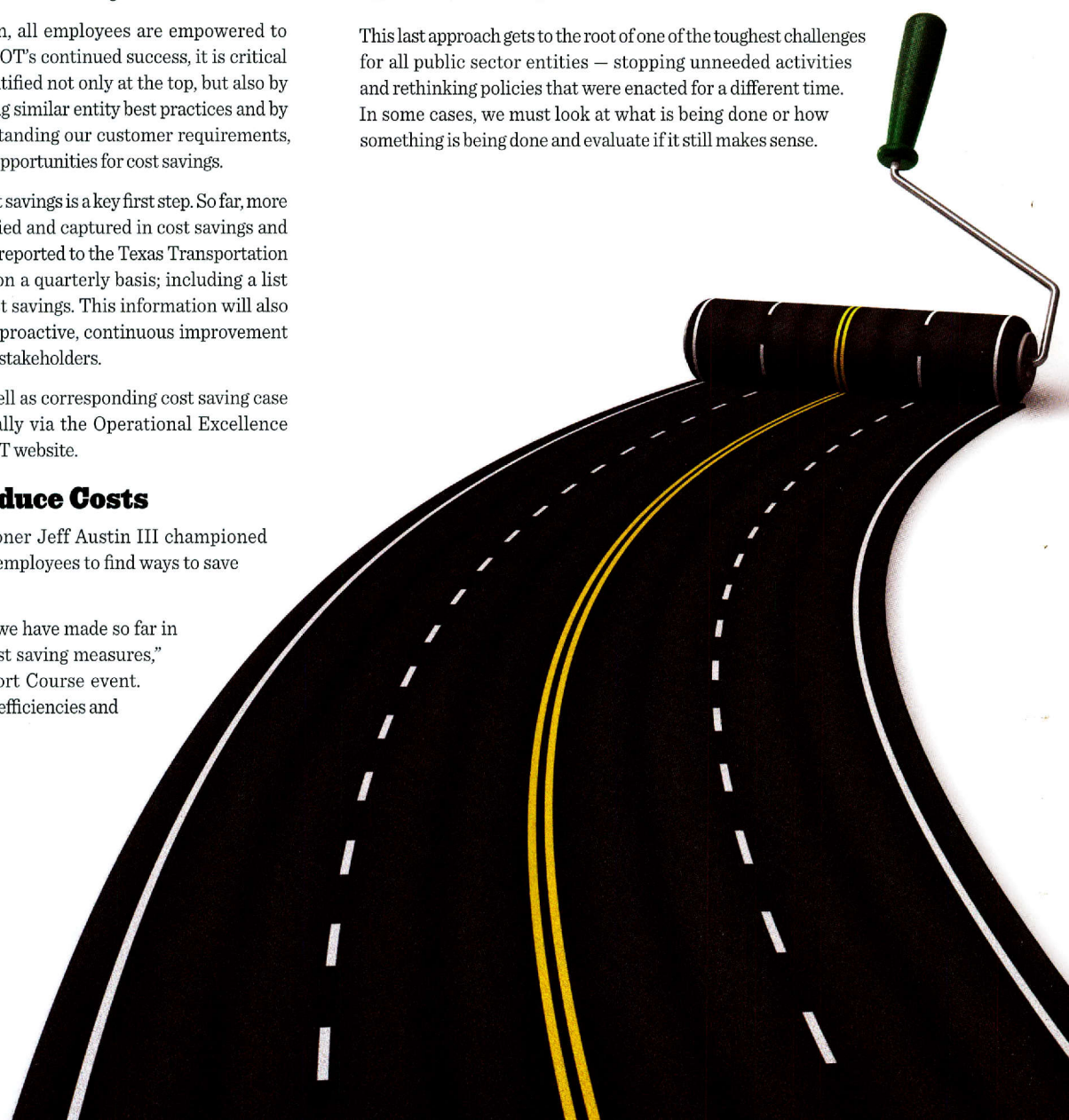
Texas Transportation Commissioner Jeff Austin III championed this effort and challenged TxDOT employees to find ways to save even more.

"I am impressed with the progress we have made so far in researching and implementing cost saving measures," Austin said during last year's Short Course event. "I challenge each of you to find those efficiencies and cost savings in your area."

There are hundreds of different ways to reduce costs. These opportunities generally fall within the following broad categories:

- **Reduce wastage** – eliminate fraud and waste, buy better.
- **Re-engineer processes** – make model for delivering current services more efficient.
- **Change culture** – even small costs add up, encourage hundreds of small cost savings events.
- **Change the operating model** – deliver services in a different and more cost effective way.
- **Stop spending** – freeze budgets, stop hiring, cut capital budgets.
- **Change and/or cancel the services** – review policy options and the service portfolio, challenge everything, ask whether government should be involved at all.

This last approach gets to the root of one of the toughest challenges for all public sector entities – stopping unneeded activities and rethinking policies that were enacted for a different time. In some cases, we must look at what is being done or how something is being done and evaluate if it still makes sense.



Examples of Cost Savings

Austin said many projects around the department — through maintenance recycling efforts, looking at alternative bridge materials and finding efficiencies in maintenance contract security and housekeeping services — have helped the agency save more than \$27 million.

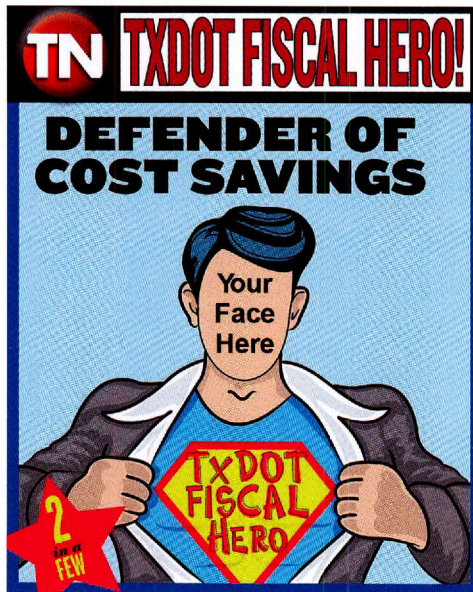
Dalton Pratt of the North Region Office recognized a savings opportunity. At last year's Short Course, Austin recognized Pratt for being a "TxDOT Fiscal Hero" and pointing out that TxDOT could save \$2 million a year by adjusting the policy requirement to use special color of paint called Federal Yellow.

Recently, TxDOT successfully priced just over \$1.1 billion in State of Texas Highway Improvement General Obligation Bonds at an overall borrowing cost of 3.37 percent. This low borrowing cost was due to the state's high credit rating, strong investor demand, and extremely favorable market conditions as interest rates remain at historic lows. It results in an annual savings for General Revenue of around \$11.5 million from the planned/budgeted level for debt service.

The bond sale included \$100 million of taxable bonds sold via competitive sale; this marks the first time TxDOT has used the competitive bid process to sell bonds. This is considered an industry best practice and resulted in lower a borrowing cost, saving TxDOT an estimated \$500,000.

TxDOT also recently leveraged improved credit ratings and favorable market conditions to refinance \$810.3 million of outstanding debt used to fund the Central Texas Turnpike System around Austin. This refinancing action saved the state some \$200 million over the life of the bonds. These savings highlight the innovative way in which TxDOT is funding projects and leveraging favorable market conditions as a standard practice; these types of key moves are critical components in the agency's move to operate more like a business.

Lastly, a joint project between the San Antonio and Austin districts underlines TxDOT's ability to work smartly as a team to realize cost savings. Leading up to the recent Formula One (F1) race in Austin,



the Austin District identified an emergency beam repair requirement in the vicinity of the F1 racetrack. However, the district did not have the resources on hand to respond to this concern. The San Antonio District was able to provide the right equipment and expertise to conduct the critical beam work, and thus open this critical roadway in time for the F1 race. These actions resulted in over \$100,000 in savings to the department.

Realizing Results


Moving forward, we continue to have many initiatives on the horizon that will help to further realize additional cost savings in the near future. Every quarter, new cost savings are centrally reported to and vetted by

Operational Excellence, thereby adding a degree of confidence that the savings are supportable.

"We hope to leverage some of the best ideas across the enterprise so we can continue to realize cost savings everywhere," said Brian Smallwood, director of Operational Excellence. "Our office is excited to support the development of these cost savings ideas by providing the analytical horsepower and process improvement techniques, as needed, to capture these cost savings."

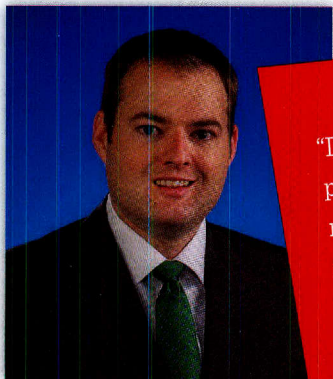
Austin said it is through the leadership, guidance and initiatives taken at every level of the department that these efficiencies have been achieved, and will continue to be achieved. Continuing to develop an efficiency-seeking culture will best position TxDOT to receive the tools from our federal and state leaders to accomplish our goals to the best of our ability.

"While certain ideas may not seem like they save much, the cumulative effect over five or 10 years can be monumental," Austin said. "But this effort involves getting ideas from everyone — every district, division, region and office — because no matter how large or small, every idea counts."

If you know of cost savings opportunities, bring this insight to your supervisor. All employees are expected to consistently and routinely look for cost saving opportunities in their part of the organization. And all leaders are expected to mindfully consider these potential opportunities for improvement. Together, we can continue to demonstrate TxDOT's commitment to be good stewards of the taxpayers money and re-invest those savings to the benefit of the state's transportation system. 

LOOK FOR COST SAVINGS IDEAS THROUGH MULTIPLE LENSES

Top-down	Commission members, Administration, DDORs, policy staff, legislators
Bottom-up	Managers, front-line employees
Inside-out	Leading practices from other government and the private sector
Outside-in	What do our customers and Texans want from our services?



A MINUTE WITH...

Chief of Staff **SCOTT HAYWOOD**

"During my initial year with TxDOT, I have seen remarkable progress in reaching out to our transportation partners and legislative leaders. The entire agency and its employees have worked together to embrace our mission of working with others to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas. Recent praise from Lt. Governor David Dewhurst and Texas House Transportation Committee Chairman Larry Phillips show the successful impact of the hard work and efforts made by the TxDOT team. I am excited about where we are headed as an agency, which is only possible because of the talent and dedication of our employees."

SAFETY AT ARM'S LENGTH:

Bridge Inspections are Critical for Keeping Roadways Safe for Drivers

Fracture critical bridge inspections are an important part of TxDOT's Bridge Division daily functions. According to the Federal Highway Administration, this type of inspection is vital since failure of even one of the steel tension members of a bridge could cause a portion of or the entire bridge to collapse.

Bridge Division Field Operations Section Director Keith Ramsey is a 28-year veteran of TxDOT experienced in bridge design and bridge inspection. Branch Manager Bernie Carrasco, who has been with TxDOT for the past 11 years, oversees bridge inspection contracts and all inspection branch employees and operations.

Carrasco shared why he enjoys his duties, "I like the mixture of office and field work, although I don't get out as much now. We have five in-house inspectors who perform the vast majority of inspections." Carrasco was quick to recognize his fracture critical bridge inspection team: Brenda Guerra, P.E.; Paul Rollins, P.E.; Lu Trujillo, P.E.; Robert King and Rodney "Bubba" Stabeno.

Ramsey added that fracture critical bridge inspections are only a part of the bridge inspection program. "Fracture critical bridge inspections began in the early 1990s, when Texas started performing both on- and off-system bridge inspections," he said.

Explaining "cyclic loading" (constant, ongoing weight from heavy vehicles) as the main factor of fatigue causing the fractures, Ramsey provided the following analogy, "It's like a paper clip that is constantly bent. It will weaken and eventually snap at a 'beyond fatigue' point."

Ramsey's division constantly monitors bridge conditions. And while age can be a factor, he noted the loads borne by the bridges are more of a concern. Elements directly affecting performance of the bridge must be periodically inspected and monitored.

Carrasco went into further detail, "Cyclic loading should be an important factor when deciding the frequency to carry out fracture critical inspections. Some bridges experience very few truck crossings. This argument has been presented for moving to a more risk-based inspection cycle, but this consideration is not presently allowed."

In fracture critical inspections, inspectors are looking for relatively small anomalies. "Fracture critical inspections must be performed at a much closer distance not to exceed at arm's length," said Carrasco.

"Concrete bridges and compression elements are not considered fracture critical," Ramsey pointed out. "All truss bridges, due to their steel components, are fracture critical."

Statewide, the number of fracture critical inspections has increased dramatically from 650 bridges previously to 1,800 now that the department includes additional off-system bridges. Inspection requirements have also been updated.



"The frequency of inspections was as long as 60 months, now an inspection must be conducted at least every 24 months," Ramsey said, noting some bridges are monitored every six to 12 months, depending on the condition of the bridge.

Ramsey commented that on new bridge construction, "New flyovers are being built, which are fracture critical, and there's lots of money and manpower involved to carry out the inspections."

TxDOT has partnered with the University of Texas to perform research to show that these types of structures are redundant and should not be considered fracture critical. The experiment included severing the bottom flange and one web of a single-span, twin-tub unit to demonstrate the redundancy of the system. The experiment was a complete success with the span continuing to carry full load even with several load paths removed.

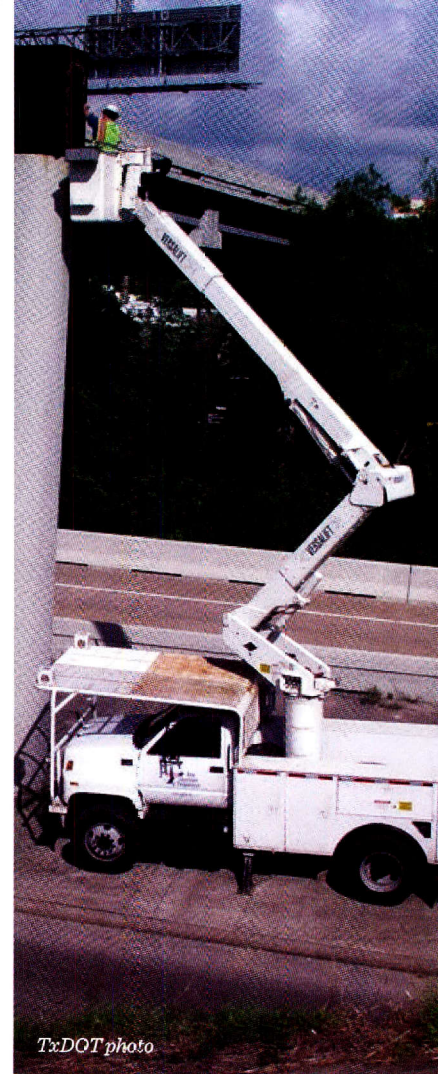
"Coordinating the inspections is pretty tough – I'd like to recognize districts that assist with coordinating traffic control and the railroad spotters," Ramsey said, explaining that most bridge inspections in the metro areas have to be conducted at night or on weekends. There are related safety concerns with working at night. "Lighting issues pose a problem when inspections are conducted at night as this is a visual, arm's-length inspection. We make do with what we have," he added.

Training is important to ensure safety. "There are confined space issues in performing the inspections, so inspectors are trained in entry with air monitors. If the oxygen has been depleted by the corrosion, inspectors can mitigate the lack of oxygen by opening up the hatches. Complicating the inspections is the fact that some have standing water inside box caps," Carrasco said.

Ramsey continued, "Thanks goes to the administration. They provided monetary resources to address our issues." One recent purchase was the new "Snooper" truck, added to the fleet in September. "We can now inspect places that we couldn't reach in the past," said Ramsey.

Another fact that Ramsey recognizes is that while the number of bridge inspections continues to increase and inspection requirements have been updated to be more stringent, there has not been a correlating increase in staff.

Reinforcing their enthusiasm for their work, Carrasco mused, "Nothing stays the same." Ramsey added, "True! Things are constantly changing." 



TxDOT photo

8TH ANNUAL TRANSPORTATION FORUM FLOCKS TO *Austin* IN FEBRUARY



With the spotlight on the so-called federal fiscal cliff and the start of the state legislative session, followers of transportation policy will have more than enough to discuss and debate at the Eighth Annual Texas Transportation Forum. This year's event will be Feb. 17-19 at the Hilton Austin.

The Forum, co-hosted by TxDOT, the Associated General Contractors of Texas and the Texas Good Roads Transportation Association, is the state's premier event for state and national policy makers, industry experts and business leaders to examine and exchange ideas about the future of transportation. Last year, more than 1,300 attendees participated, the largest number since the Forum began.

Keynote speakers scheduled for this year's event include former Texas Transportation Commissioner and current State Sen. Robert Nichols from Jacksonville; Harvey Rosenblum, executive vice president and director of research for the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; and William Thompson Jr. with the national municipal underwriting firm of Siebert Bradford Shank & Company.

With the 2014 planned expansion of the Panama Canal, attendees at this year's conference will also hear firsthand about the canal's progress and its impact on Texas ports.

Online registration is available through Feb. 6 at <http://www.txdot.gov/ttf>, as well as onsite during the course of the conference. 

TXDOT'S INVALUABLE WETLANDS



The 2,243-acre Anderson Tract Mitigation Bank in Smith County was purchased by TxDOT in 1994 to provide more than 2,200 mitigation bank credits for geographic service areas in the Atlanta, Paris, Tyler and Lufkin Districts.

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

One way TxDOT protects the state's natural resources is through mitigation banking. This process restores, enhances and preserves wetlands and environmentally sensitive land to offset expected adverse impacts from future highway development. The goal of mitigation is to replace the function and value of a habitat that would be negatively affected by a proposed project and meet the requirements of federal permits.

Early in the development of transportation projects, TxDOT must obtain environmental approvals for work within the project's footprint. The challenge lies in both protecting valuable natural resources and meeting the transportation infrastructure needs of the state.


TxDOT works to avoid and minimize the environmental impacts on wetlands as much as possible during any project. The department can offset unavoidable impacts on wetlands by

deducting credits from a mitigation bank. In some cases, projects with unavoidable impacts could not proceed at all without the ability to offset impacts with mitigation credits.

More than a decade ago, TxDOT purchased more than 9,000 acres of ecologically important bottomland and wetlands in East Texas to use for mitigation banks. To prepare for future projects that would have an environmental impact, the department invested in the 2,243 acre Anderson Tract Mitigation Bank in Smith County, a 3,353-acre Blue Elbow Swamp in Orange County and a 3,552-acre Coastal Bottomlands Mitigation Bank in Brazoria County. These wetlands have proved invaluable during the environmental approval process for projects impacting these environmentally sensitive areas.

For example, the improvement project at U.S. 59 and Loop 287 in Lufkin required mitigation credits

from the Anderson Tract to offset environmental impacts, saving an estimated \$1.1 million in environmental clearance costs. Although it's difficult to estimate the potential cost savings from the more than 6,500 mitigation bank credits purchased decades earlier, experts agree that the department's initial investment has grown exponentially. The critical component is the time savings to TxDOT during the permitting process. The ability to draw on the already established bank is much more efficient than addressing mitigation needs on a project-by-project basis. The added benefit is TxDOT's contribution in preserving these threatened ecosystems.

The foresight displayed by TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division has accelerated East Texas transportation projects over the past two decades and will continue to do so into the future. 

A MINUTE WITH...

Laredo District Administrator **MELISA MONTEMAYOR**

"Our district is fortunate to be at the heart of economic opportunities as a result of having the highest number of crossings along the Texas-Mexico border, and most recently, the booming Eagle Ford energy sector. The transportation challenges raised by these opportunities require our staff to work diligently and step up to provide safe and reliable transportation infrastructure for the public. Working with our local leaders and community is also imperative as we move toward innovative solutions. Thanks to the talented staff at the district, we continue to address daily challenges with a positive, can-do attitude."





COLLABORATING

In the Cloud

Since the launch of the Microsoft Outlook Migration project, the Information Technology Operations Division and General Services Division have been hard at work putting together a comprehensive plan that will allow employees to efficiently use, store and upload documents. The plan will assist in accomplishing the department's mission — saving TxDOT time and a significant amount in IT administration costs.

In the coming months, the department aims to provide new tools that include the ability to convert archived GroupWise emails into Outlook emails, new SharePoint My Sites and Team Sites, and a program called

IBM FileNet that will hold final documents of record to live out their retention. Just like Outlook, these three new tools are all offered in the "cloud." Cloud computing is entirely Internet based — where shared resources, software and information are provided to computers and other devices on demand, much like an electricity grid. Using a cloud service means the department does not have to maintain on-site servers. The GroupWise servers will be shut down on Jan. 1.

Seven thousand employees reduced their mailbox sizes to below 500 megabytes and the entire department now has their GroupWise archive on a local drive. In an effort to enable employees to access and sort through those emails, they will have the ability to convert their GroupWise archive so that they can be read in Outlook as .PST files. Microsoft .PST files will be arranged as an extension of an employee's mailbox and all subfolders will come across during the conversion process. Employees will have from Jan. 1 to June 30 to review and clean up their .PST emails and attachments in Outlook.

Additionally, to increase employees' opportunities to collaborate with each other, Microsoft SharePoint's My Site and Team Site are two new applications for temporary document storage for individuals and groups. Once an employee has a My Site, they will be able to enhance their email storage by gaining an additional 500 megabytes of space in the cloud to store files. Team Sites allow employees to define groups of people who need to share and collaborate on documents. A team can be based on where the employee works or on a project.

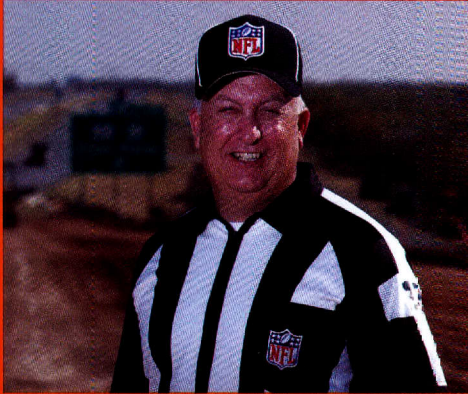
When an employee or a team has finalized a document in SharePoint, the new practice will be to move it to FileNet for final storage which will be available later this year. FileNet will be the officially sanctioned repository for final documents. Employees will be asked to evaluate the structure and volume of documents on the U: and T: drives, only retaining essential documents. Limits on the volume for these drives will also be announced later this year.

This is only the beginning of a plan to provide employees with the tools they need to do their jobs and work together more effectively. TxDOT is streamlining programs and processes — using the latest technology to meet the needs of the department and its employees. **TN**

REPOSITORY	PURPOSE	LIMITS
GroupWise Archive	Temporary site for archived email messages and attachments	Available until Jan. 1, 2013
Microsoft .PST files	Temporary files that allow for the organization of GroupWise emails and attachments in Outlook	Available until June 30, 2013
Microsoft Outlook	New email tool that has replaced GroupWise for sending and receiving messages	500 MB and 90-day storage
SharePoint My Sites	Sites for personal work-related items that may include email, documents being drafted and reference information	500 MB
SharePoint Team Sites	Sites for collaboration and the production of project-related documents department wide	5 GB
T: Drive	Used for reference materials, documents, indexes or database files shared within an individual office	To be established in 2013
U: Drive	Used for personal unfinished or confidential work-related items	To be established in 2013
Crossroads and TxDOT.gov	Internal and external websites, respectively, for employees and the public that hold general information, forms, documents and manuals	
IBM FileNet	To retain completed electronic documents and records for retention purposes	To be launched in 2013

I AM AN...

MPO Coordinator



WHAT DOES A REGIONAL MPO COORDINATOR DO?

A metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is a federally required transportation planning body comprised of elected and appointed officials who represent local, state and federal governments or agencies that have an interest in or responsibility for transportation planning and programming. An MPO develops the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and a Unified Planning Work Program for its metropolitan planning area. These documents are a prerequisite for an area to receive federal transit and federal highway funding. TxDOT is responsible for ensuring the MPOs comply with federal laws. As a coordinator, I monitor the West Region MPOs' activities to ensure they comply.

I work with city and county governments, local TxDOT districts and divisions, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

HOW DOES YOUR JOB HELP TXDOT ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION?

The MPOs are our partners in the planning process. I provide the MPOs with support to accomplish their mission locally, which will assist TxDOT on a statewide level.

WHAT MPOS ARE IN THE WEST REGION?

Abilene, Amarillo, El Paso, Lubbock, Midland/Odessa and San Angelo.

DO THE MPOS IN A REGION COORDINATE THEIR PLANNING PROGRAMS?

TxDOT implements their plans into a statewide plan. We coordinate our efforts on a regional level by conducting workshops for our West Region MPOs to exchange information and ideas on issues.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT MANAGING THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR YOUR REGIONAL MPOS, HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME?

I like to farm and raise a few cattle. I also spend a lot of time on the football field as an official, almost year-round working high school and arena football.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN OFFICIATING?

I have always had a passion for football having played it in high school. A fellow TxDOT employee was a longtime official and I got intrigued listening to his stories. He suggested I try it out, and 22 years later, I'm still doing it. I do need to acknowledge those I have worked with who have allowed me the flexibility in my work schedule because it does take time away.



JOE CLARK

WHO DO YOU OFFICIATE FOR?

In Texas, the state organization for high schools is the Texas Association of Sports Officials. I have worked college football in the Lone Star and American Southwest Conferences, and just recently for the National Football League when the regular officials were on strike.

HOW MANY NFL GAMES DID YOU OFFICIATE?

I worked in seven games as a line judge and as an alternate for several games.

HOW WERE YOU SELECTED TO SUB?

I heard on the news that the NFL officials' contract had expired, negotiations were breaking down and there could be a possible lockout. The NFL announced they may use replacement officials to begin the year. I inquired to the NFL, was sent an application and a few weeks later, I got a contract.

WHAT KIND OF PREPARATION DID THE LEAGUE GIVE YOU PRIOR TO SUBBING?

The NFL conducted two workshops before the pre-season games and a mini-workshop the week before the regular season started.

WHAT WAS THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OFFICIATING FOR THE NFL AND YOUR USUAL DUTIES?

In the NFL, there are a lot more administrative duties before, during and after the game. The rules are a little different, and there's additional responsibility for the officials.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING WITH THE PLAYERS AND COACHES?

There was a star-struck effect at first, but when the game starts, you lose track of who is actually playing. It's just colored jerseys and numbers at that point, but when you get home and watch the replay, it really hits you who you were actually there with.

HOW DID THE FANS TREAT YOU?

Good at first, but as the season went on and the media gave attention to the mistakes that were made, fans got pretty rowdy. Some were humorous to listen to, and some downright bitter. We had the support of the league, team owners and a lot of the players. You have to keep in mind; there would not have been games without the replacement officials.

BARRING ANOTHER STRIKE, WOULD YOU DO IT AGAIN?

Most definitely, yes! **TN**

EMPLOYEE

Q&A

with Chris Caron

What does a deputy district engineer do?

I'm kind of a jack-of-all-trades but a master of none. That means you have to know a lot to get the job done but not in great depth.

What is the one New Year's resolution you are determined to keep this year?

I intend to continue going to the gym every day. It has been good for my health.

What is the worst Valentine's Day gift you've ever received? It was a set of floor mats from my college girlfriend. My friends kidded me for a long time about how romantic that was.

Why is your district the best in TxDOT?

We're the best because of the incredible quality of work done by our employees.

Who is the best Batman: Adam West, Michael Keaton or Christian Bale?

I think it's Adam West because the classic TV series relied on writing and plot rather than special effects like the movies.

How has your district focused on safety?

We emphasize to all of our employees the importance of concentrating on what they're doing while on the job, as well as being aware of their surroundings, especially in a work zone.

If you won the lottery, would you retire or keep working?

If it were a half a billion dollars like it was late last year, I think I could safely retire.

Have you done the "Gangnam Style" dance?

I've seen it, but I'd be scared to try it. The thought of attempting it would never cross my mind.

Chris Caron is the deputy district engineer for the Corpus Christi District. A third-generation employee, Chris's career began at TxDOT as a summer intern in 1984. He then started working full-time for TxDOT in 1990. Twenty-three years later he says summer internships spent at the George West Area and Maintenance office were most significant to him. It was the office where his grandfather once worked and from which his father retired. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in math from Southwestern University in Georgetown and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M.

Who inspires you at work?

Our district employees inspire me by their dedication and the expertise they employ to get the job done every day.


What was the first album you ever bought?

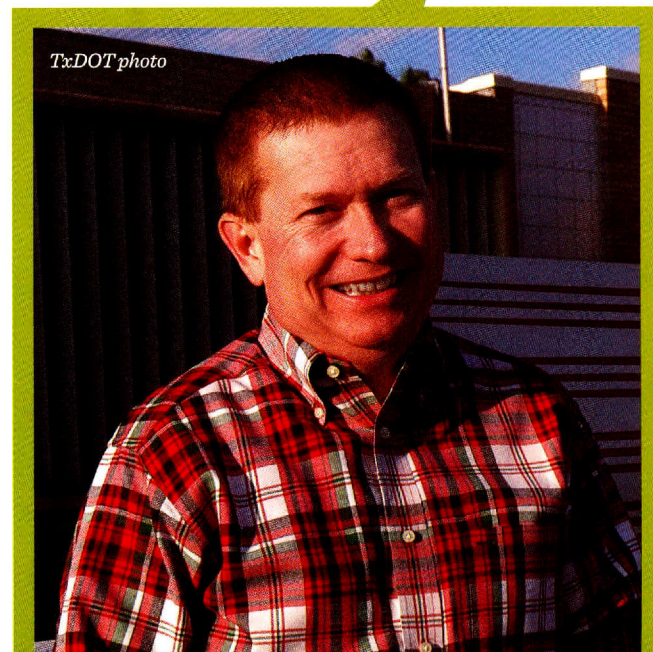
It was a vinyl album by the Eagles featuring their greatest hits. I say vinyl because there are those who've never seen anything other than compact discs.

What is your least favorite chore at home?

I believe dusting is my least favorite. No matter how often you do it the job never seems to be done completely. You can always find more dust, especially here in Texas.

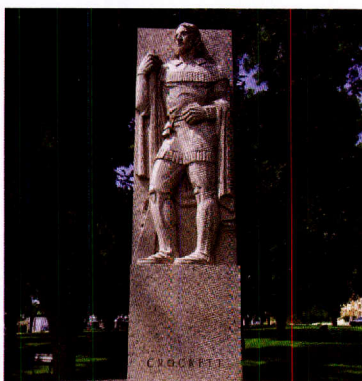
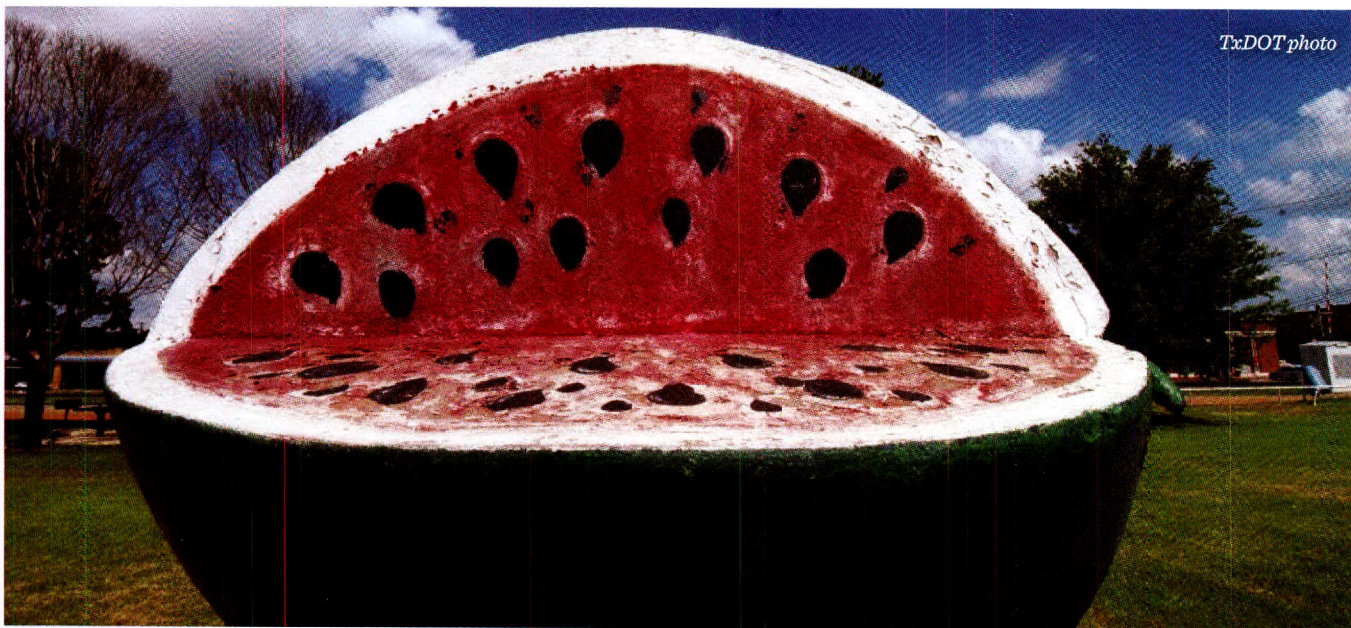
What makes TxDOT a best-in-class agency?

I think it's the innovative approach TxDOT uses in many different ways. Management is more proactive in everything from personnel matters to pavement formulas. Processes are being examined and changed where needed. The new Performance Plan is a good example of this. The positive attitude is contagious. 



The Travel Information Division supplied this photo depicting an identifiable landmark you may have seen traveling around Texas. If you think you know what this is a photo of and/or where it was taken, contact Bill Powell at Bill.Powell@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8606. Deadline for guesses is Jan. 30.

Where Am I?



Identified:

Congratulations to our official first identifier: David Ham of the Maintenance Division who identified our picture of the David Crockett Monument which is a statue in Ozona City Park in the town square honoring the hero for whom the county is named.

Other people correctly identifying the picture: Chris Cowen and James Norment (BRY); Danny Williams (BWD); Todd Deere, Bentley Mittel (SJT); Kerney Reed (TRV); Joe Slocum (Retiree).

A MINUTE WITH...



Director of the Project Management Office **LYNN ISAAK**

"The Project Management Office's tagline is 'Creating and launching new systems for the ease of project management.' In keeping with that motto, we are creating several new initiatives, the priority being the Project Health Management Information System. This system captures information from 10 existing legacy systems and brings this data together to give a full project overview and the estimated costs to complete the projects. I'm passionate about delivering this to help manage our projects with greater efficiency and build trust with our stakeholders, showing them how good we are at delivering projects to the citizens of Texas."

MILESTONES

November 2012 Service Awards



District:

Abilene

- 15** Gregory R. Cotton
Kyle D. Lacey

Amarillo

- 35** Danny L. Massie
- 15** David S. Swaringen
- 10** Lamar L. Crear
- 5** George R. Henderson
Jimmy L. Thomas Jr.

Atlanta

- 15** Kelli A. Speer
- 10** Bruce D. Boobar
Chad G. Heldt
Tyrone B. Johnson

Austin

- 30** Wayne L. Rehnborg
- 20** Gary E. Parson
- 15** Rose E. Morris
Brad H. Phipps
- 10** Winn D. Linsey
- 5** Lorena E. Echeverria De Misi
Erin S. Williams

Beaumont

- 15** Horace S. Estes
Billie J. Mays Jr.
- 5** Jacob L. Lewis
Darrelton D. Richardson

Brownwood

- 10** Kevin L. Crim
- 5** Armando A. Garcia
Ramon Gutierrez Jr.
Richard H. Vandergriff
Gary W. Watson

Bryan

- 15** John D. Moravec
- 5** Don R. Senchal Jr.

Childress

- 15** Roy D. Bertrand
Monte L. Elliott
Joe E. Watts

- 10** Kamela D. Bonham
Clifford A. Byrd
Shon R. Crouch

Corpus Christi

- 30** Janan N. Sahtout Lee
- 15** Felix C. Lopez
- 10** Delma E. Cave
Jose V. Sosa
- 5** Erick C. Christoferson
Guadalupe R. Garcia
Rene Longoria

Dallas

- 45** Wallace B. Scalf
- 30** Mark A. Eder
- 25** Richard A. Cortez
- 20** Jimmy D. Bertoldo
John D. Brewer
Bruce W. Nolley
Idemudian E. Udabor
Jacqueline M. Weeks
- 15** James E. Atkins II
James S. Fant
- 10** David P. Honza
Nicasio Lozano
- 5** Priscilla A. Block
Bobby D. Rosselot

El Paso

- 20** Robbie A. Burns
Rodolfo G. Sanchez
- 10** Guillermo Grado
- 5** Gerardo R. Brito

Fort Worth

- 15** Thomas N. Hite
Gregory S. Mills
Gerald D. Robbins
- 10** Lemar D. Leonard
Scotty L. Peevey

Houston

- 25** Richard D. Escamilla
Joseph A. Stanley
Samuel M. Walden
Ivor E. Walker
- 15** Edwin W. Gardenhire
Linda G. Hall

- 10** Corando I. Alegria
Jamal Z. Fadda
Hien N. Pham
Esteban M. Tovar
- 5** Ronald M. Brown
Daniel J. Dvorak
Sidronio Flores Jr.
Robert N. Johnson
Philip D. Newmons Jr.
Anthony S. Prye III
Rodney Punch
Ryan C. Walker

Laredo

- 20** Ramon J. Rodriguez
- 15** Lilia I. Gutierrez
Fidel Quiroz
- 10** Alberto A. Aldape
Hector M. Cayanan

Lubbock

- 30** Michael W. Killough
Luis M. Martinez
- 20** Terry L. Crutcher
Winston R. Kelly Jr.
Joe L. Macias
- 5** Zosimo L. Agrimor
James T. Collins
Neal Darling
Jerry J. Rocha

Lufkin

- 25** William H. Hodges
- 15** Jimmie A. Johnson
- 10** Kealon D. Hightower
- 5** Quentin B. Matthews

Odessa

- 20** Salvador R. Garza Jr.
- 15** Louis B. Lara
- 10** Griselda S. Carrasco
- 5** Herminia Gonzalez
Rene Melendez

Paris

- 20** Billy M. Meador
- 10** Bryan A. Esmaili-Doki
- 5** Jimmy D. Miller

Pharr

- 15** Eduardo Arredondo
Michael G. Quintanilla
- 10** Juan J. Salinas
- 5** Ryan M. Burch

San Angelo

- 5** Arnulfo Gonzales
Ringo G. Hunt
Donald C. Ratliff III
Troy A. Wellmann
Armando R. Ybarra

San Antonio

- 30** Julia M. Brown
Daniel S. Silva
- 25** David R. Smith
- 15** Martin W. Bordovsky
Clara Carbajal-Sanchez
Jason M. Meyer
Ishmael C. Trevino
- 10** Cody M. Kosub

Tyler

- 25** Harlan A. Bollman
- 20** Stephen S. Mitchell
- 15** Micheal D. Baker
Lupe S. Cruz Jr.
Benny S. Steen
Randy C. York
- 5** Natalio Gaona Jr.
Tammy T. Savell

Waco

- 25** Brent W. Meyer
- 15** Francisca Chavez

Wichita Falls

- 15** Joe D. Moore
- 10** Julie A. Pruitt

Yoakum

- 15** Mark A. Wenske
- 10** Keith A. Dornak

Division/ Office/Region:

Administration

- 10** Leticia T. Von Rossum

Audit

- 10** Carol B. Grimm

Aviation

- 10** Megan E. Caffall
Amy C. Slaughter
Becky A. Vick

Construction

- 15** Graham W. Eudey
- 10** Jimmy Z. Si
- 5** Miranda D. Unruh

East Regional Support Center

- 10** Terry L. Golden

Environmental Affairs

- 5** Linda L. Pendergras

Finance

- 25** Miguel Cantu Jr.
- 20** Doris L. Knight
- 10** Lindaura Dasilva
- 5** Johnnie Tennie

General Services

- 25** Karen L. Dennis
Monty L. Harris
- 10** William White
- 5** Jerry L. Troyer

IT Customer Relations

- 10** Stacey D. Worsham

IT Operations

- 15** Dwight D. Adams
- 10** Richard Dominguez

IT Services

- 10** Tzuoh-Hwa Liu

Maintenance

- 10** Earl W. McGlothlin

North Regional Support Center

- 5** John L. Rushing

Project Management

- 25** Charles L. Ditmire
Gary L. Ray
- 10** John T. Hajek

Right Of Way

- 5** Anna Lydia R. Benavides

South Regional Support Center

- 10** David Guzman

Toll Operations

- 5** Ana R. Munoz

Transportation Planning & Programming

- 10** Lori A. Morel

Travel Information

- 10** Lois M. Rodriguez

West Regional Support Center

- 10** Henry Duran

December 2012 Service Awards



District:

Abilene

- 20** Clifton P. Hallford
Alan S. Thomas
- 15** Jesse Camacho
Jerry M. Conner
- 10** Gerald L. Brown

Amarillo

- 10** Ronnie M. Hathaway Jr.
Blair E. Johnson
- 5** Jerold E. Frizzell

Atlanta

- 10** Bernice L. Lockett

Austin

- 25** Bobby J. Doherty Jr.
Michael H. McKissick
- 20** Terry D. Schulze
- 15** Rosalinda Gamez
- 5** Edwill J. Butler

Beaumont

- 20** Donald L. Dozier
Jody C. Pitman
- 10** Danny O. Brack
James W. Thames
- 5** Gerhard G. Shay

Brownwood

- 25** Larry G. Smith
- 20** Joe F. Martinez
Gilbert B. Ramon
- 15** Bradley W. Neely

MILESTONES

December 2012 Service Awards



District cont.:

Bryan

- 20 Ricky L. King
- 10 Casey R. Story
Jason L. Tomek

Childress

- 15 Randy R. Arnn
Charles R. Flemmons
- 10 Steven K. Jones

Corpus Christi

- 25 Curtis W. Shandy
- 10 Erasmo S. Cuellar
Bobby L. Lewis
Joe Tellez
- 5 Justin D. Ives

Dallas

- 20 Roy L. Bradford
Robert L. Graham
- 15 David R. Lemons
- 10 Jae H. Baag
Richard A. Chaney
Alan J. Halbrooks
Lorenzo R. Martinez
Rusty L. Vess
- 5 Daniel J. McGee

El Paso

- 30 James Bell
- 20 Rafael M. Delgado
Roberto Frausto
Andres J. Pacheco
- 15 Alfredo P. Sanchez
- 10 Andrew M. Beauchamp
- 5 Levi L. Pavia

Fort Worth

- 30 Ronald J. Robinson
- 20 Nelson J. Wellspeak
- 15 Alireza M. Shafiye
Jack L. Shearman

- 5 Donald R. Wonner

Houston

- 25 Raul F. Bartholomew
Eliza C. Paul
Jeff A. Volk
- 15 Grant Chim
Pamela M. Martinez
- 10 John F. Cato
Blake L. Labay
Cynthia Lee
Michael J. Maresh
- 5 Stella S. Brooks

Laredo

- 25 Rosa E. Trevino
- 20 Alfredo Alaniz Jr.
- 15 Pablo Resendez

Lubbock

- 15 Linda S. King
Francis Romanofski
Kelley W. Stewart
- 10 Raul Sassenhagen Jr.

Lufkin

- 25 David R. Collmorgen
Paul D. Montgomery
Jimmy G. Parham
- 20 Rodolfo Gonzalez
- 10 Jacky K. Hill
Shannon Q. Ramos

Odessa

- 30 Manuel A. Muniz Jr.
- 20 Ector G. Almendarez
Kathryn C. Evans
Guadalupe A. Villegas
- 15 Edward R. Goebel
Robert Ornelas
- 10 Ray Valverde
- 5 Carlos M. Flores Jr.

Paris

- 25 Bernie L. Holder
- 15 Vickie L. Coplin
Daniel C. Jacks
- 10 Justin W. Ferguson
Daniel G. Taylor

Pharr

- 20 Jose N. Pena
- 15 Jennie M. Pedraza
- 10 Michele Cavazos
Juan C. Marfil
Nidia Ramirez

San Angelo

- 15 Branon C. Mann
- 10 Francisco J. Mendez
- 5 Salvador E. Fuentes Jr.

San Antonio

- 30 Jesse Hayes Jr.
John J. Paniagua
- 25 Samuel Mendoza
Jerome D. Pavliska
- 15 Jeffery W. Cole
Rudy E. Reyna
- 10 Ernest C. Casias
Jose L. Martinez
- 5 Justin R. Wiatrek

Tyler

- 10 Wyatt B. Adair
Michael K. Allen
Clarence M. Berry

Waco

- 30 Marvin R. Pankonien
- 15 David O. Herrell
- 10 Donnie R. Morales
- 5 Leona L. Aparicio

Wichita Falls

- 20** Ronney L. Stone
- 5** Jeffrey D. Mills

Yoakum

- 15** Kenneth W. Kocurek
- 5** Bernard E. Jurena

Division/ Office/Region:

Aviation

- 5** Timothy J. Borgmann
James T. Reid

Civil Rights

- 20** Berdell A. Collins

Construction

- 20** Jana M. Buck

Environmental Affairs

- 15** Gordon L. Ellis
- 5** Summer J. Chandler
Carrie L. Costilla

Finance

- 25** Patricia Gracia Morales
- 20** Shelly J. Hanke
Meleisa B. Myrick
Susanna P. Vredenburg

General Services

- 30** Donald W. Ekvall
- 20** Georges L. Barrera
- 10** Pat M. Vardell IV

Human Resources

- 10** Mendi L. Taylor

IT Customer Relations

- 20** John H. Hudson
- 15** Michael L. Williams
- 10** Charles E. Kern

IT Operations

- 25** Patrick H. Lea Jr.

IT Services

- 30** Richard M. Lelle
- 5** Alonzo Balderaz Jr.

Maintenance

- 10** James R. Ormsby

Right Of Way

- 25** Jaime Cruz
- 20** Ismael Hernandez
- 15** John E. Baxter
- 10** Wallace Magana

Regional Support Center North

- 20** Kimberley H. Rutherford
- 10** John T. Chandler

Regional Support Center West

- 20** Andrew Chavez
- 15** Thomas H. Holcomb
- 10** Billy J. Downing

Traffic Operations

- 25** Shelli D. Belsler
- 5** Billie R. Crumley

Travel Information

- 15** Shelby L. Delgado
Cheryl M. Granger
- 10** Raquel Sanchez

Retiree Report September 2012



District:

Childress

- 28** Billy K. Trosper

Dallas

- 27** Gary D. Charlton

Houston

- 34** William H. Jarrell
- 27** Nga T. Nguyen
- 22** Jon F. Holt
- 8** Johnny L. Pursley

Lubbock

- 30** Victor J. Borrego
- 29** David Huerta

Lufkin

- 20** Thomas E. Ivey

Paris

- 16** Paula J. Jones

San Angelo

- 5** Roger L. Bailey

Tyler

- 29** Michael D. Turner

Division/ Office/Region:

Audit

- 15** Jack A. Johnson
- 10** Kent T. Leipold

Finance

- 15** Gloria P. Marks

General Services

- 7** Billy M. Gordon

Human Resources

- 18** Deborah K. Moore

IT Services

- 28** Craig A. Cox

Regional Support Center West

- 32** Julian Gonzales

Research & Technology Implementation

- 11** Duncan F. Stewart

Right Of Way

- 32** Paul D. McWilliams

Strategic Projects

- 5** Kent E. Johnson

Retiree Report October 2012



District:

Amarillo

31 June M. Baer

Childress

15 Alfred W. O'Neal

Corpus Christi

29 Pablo Mendoza

26 Joe A. Torres

6 Florencio S. Alvarado

El Paso

14 Adan Avila

Fort Worth

26 Karen J. Rogers

Houston

28 Oscar C. Medrano

27 James M. Ross

15 Harold E. Phelps

Laredo

18 Juan L. Garza

Pharr

28 Ricardo S. Gallaga Jr.

San Angelo

24 Arthur D. Welborn

San Antonio

27 William T. Shuler

Tyler

35 William R. Gill

Division/ Office/Region:

Bridge

30 Bruce T. Sims

Construction

24 Jose G. Trevino

Finance

26 Carlene R. Corbello

IT Services

11 Charles W. Eaddy

Regional Support Center West

6 Garland R. McEwin

Transportation Planning & Programming

23 Jess D. Cook

In Memoriam

District:

Bryan

Willie A. Schwarze

Maintenance Technician

Years of Service: 37

Retired: 1990

DOD: 11/7/2012

May "Rudolph" Pate

Maintenance Supervisor

Years of Service: Unknown

Retired: 1981

DOD: 11/17/2012

Jerry J. Dusek

Human Resources

Years of Service: 27

Retired: 1993

DOD: 11/25/2012

El Paso

Roger Allen Barnhart

District Lab Supervisor

Years of Service: 33

Retired: 1993

DOD: 11/26/2012

Fort Worth

Donnie Bonham

Construction Inspector

Years of Service: 31

Retired: 2000

DOD: 11/17/2012

Ernest Ralph Carr

Maintenance Technician

Years of Service: 22

Retired: 2000

DOD: 11/17/2012

George Todd

Maintenance Technician

Years of Service: 12

Retired: 1989

DOD: 11/6/2012

Houston

Thomas E. DeVoe

Maintenance Spec IV

TxDOT Service Time: 10 mos

DOD: 11/1/2012

Gordon D. Singer

Engineering Tech I

Years of Service: 6

DOD: 11/8/2012

Pharr

Adan Cortez

Engineering Tech V

Years of Service: 26

Retired: 1995

DOD: 11/24/2012

Yoakum District

George Gilbert Wood

Mechanic Equipment Shop

Years of Service: 22

Retired: 1984

DOD: 10/16/2012

Victor J. Stary

Maintenance Supervisor

Years of Service: 34

Retired: 1993

DOD: 10/20/2012

Louis M. Liendo Jr.

Dewitt County Maintenance

Years of Service: 38

Retired: 1993

DOD: 9/28/2012

Where are they now?




Former TxDOT employee Gene "Pig" Cockrell stands beside one of his yard art creations.

Television, newspapers and magazines devote time and space frequently to detailing where celebrities have gone and what they're doing today.

At TxDOT, our celebrities are the retired workers and administrators who have made our agency what it is today. This feature highlights people who have faded from sight but not from our memories.

Gene "Pig" Cockrell worked in the Wichita Falls District at the Canadian Area Office from 1953 to 1976. Pig (even his wife calls him that) started out as a surveyor and left as a junior inspector. His passion is sculpting yard art, his largest sculpture being 50 feet long and 17 feet high, and named "Aud" after his wife of 61 years, Audry. It sits atop a hill in Canadian greeting drivers on SH 83. Cockrell and his art have been featured in books and websites about roadside oddities, and while he used to spend more time maintaining his collection, at 85, he has a lot less energy. His favorite sculptures happen to be cowgirls. However, his wife insists they wear clothes. (Story and picture contributed by Adele Lewis and Ben Coker of the Wichita Falls District).

Clyde Harper retired as Childress District Maintenance Manager in 2007 after 34 years of service. In retirement, he stays busy playing golf, hunting and riding his motorcycle. He and his wife, Vicky, rode his motorcycle from Childress to Fairbanks, Alaska — a total of 9,946 miles. Last year, he traveled to Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia. In all, he has traveled by motorcycle to 34 states and two provinces in Canada, and plans to motorcycle to all of the United States except, of course, Hawaii.

Don't forget the people featured in "Where Are They Now?" don't have to be former executive directors or administration. You can nominate someone of interest who mentored you or a favorite boss. 

If there's a retiree you think might be a noteworthy subject for "Where Are They Now?" please send an email to Bill Powell at Bill.Powell@txdot.org or call him at (512) 463-8606.

Please include a contact phone number for the person you want to recommend. Also include the district and what the individual did while at TxDOT.

With your help, maybe your favorite former TxDOT employee will be in our next issue.

UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

Jan. 1

New Year's Day
(All Agencies Closed)

Jan. 21

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
(All Agencies Closed)

Jan. 31

Texas Transportation
Commission Meeting
(Austin)

Feb. 18

Presidents' Day
(All Agencies Closed)

Feb. 28

Texas Transportation
Commission Meeting
(Austin)



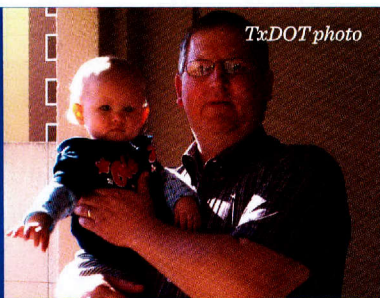
125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Copies of this publication have been deposited with the Texas State Library in compliance with the State Depository Law.
Printed on recycled paper by TxDOT General Services Division.



TN Online (TxDOT computers only):
<http://crossroads/>



TxDOT photo

David with his daughter Abby Grace before he lost weight.

GAINING SO MUCH FROM LOSING A LOT

A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH WELLNESS


I'm David Merritt, a transportation funding specialist in the Public Transportation Division, and this is the story of my journey to wellness.

Most of my adult life I have been overweight. At age 47, I was struggling with low energy, high blood pressure and exhaustion. In April of 2011, I noticed a co-worker of mine had lost some weight. He shared with me his experience using TxDOT's wellness program. I decided that if he could do it, maybe I could too. Even though it took a while for me to get started, I couldn't get the thought of improving my health out of my mind.

A couple of months after learning about the department's wellness program, I participated in the Paris District's Biggest Loser competition. At first, it was just for fun, and I started to take stock of what I was actually eating. Then, a friend told me about the smart phone application called My Fitness Pal. I started using it to count the calories I was eating every day.

The first month I lost three pounds just from watching what I ate. Actual physical exercise was not appealing to me at all. I thought to myself that if I would just walk it would be better than nothing. So I started walking and lost more weight. Then I was approved to utilize the wellness program for 30 minutes three times a week, and I started going to the gym and doing circuit training. The weight really started to come off.

So, here I am about a year later and 50 pounds lighter. My blood pressure is normal without medication. I have lots more energy, and as a result, I am much more productive than I was a year ago. It has made me realize how being out of shape can control your life.

I recently ran my first 5K for charity, and I hope to run at least a couple more in the future. I would have never been able to do this without taking advantage of our wellness program. Small changes really do make a huge difference. 



TxDOT photo

David with his daughter Ashley after he lost weight.

Contact your local WorkLife Balance Coordinator to learn about the wellness program and start your journey today!

