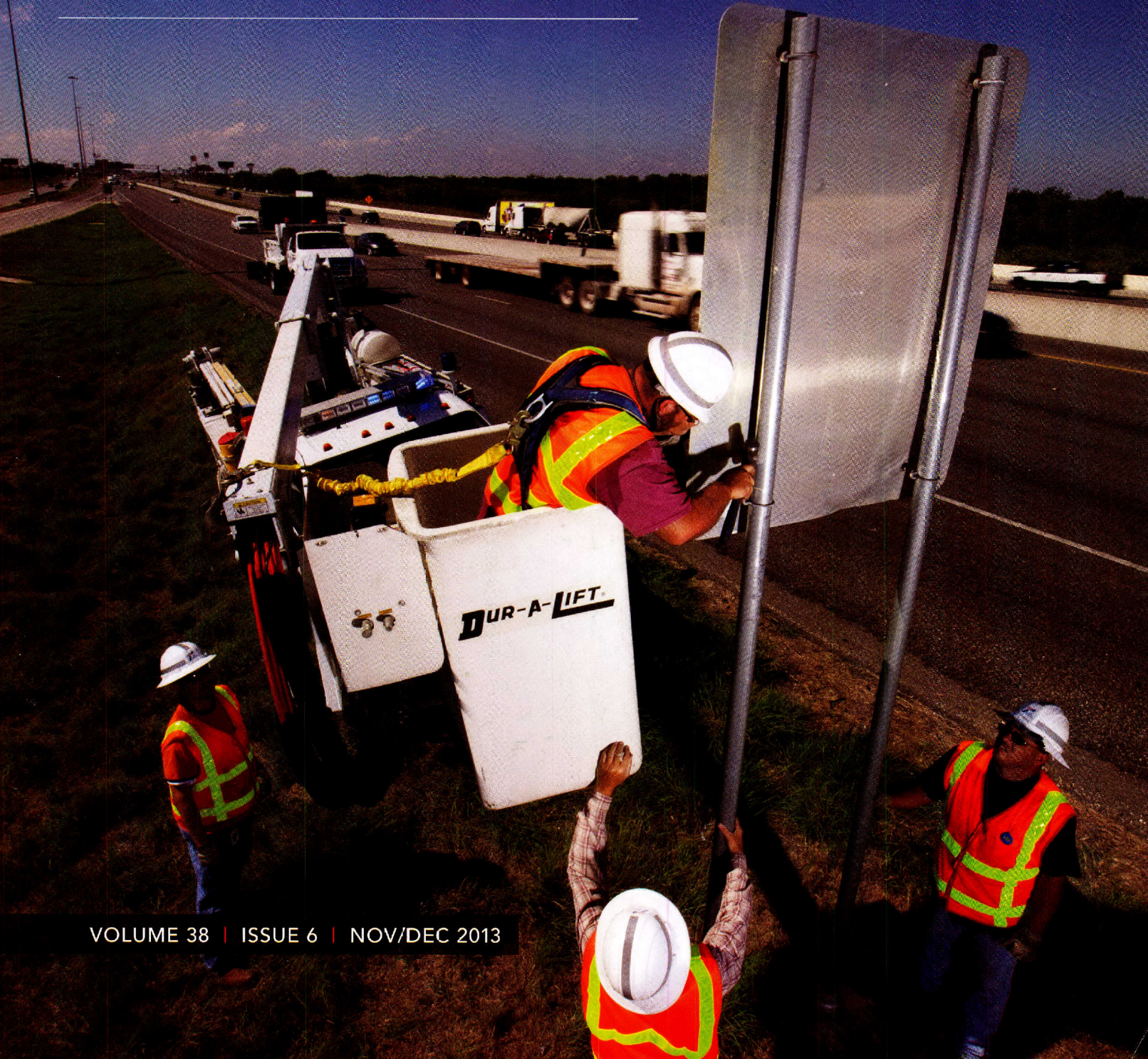


# *Giving Crews Room to Work*



*Move Over/Slow Down law keeps TxDOT out of harm's way.*



# Letter from Phil Wilson

2013 is almost over, and before long we'll be hearing those end-of-year stories about events that shaped our world. The work we did at TxDOT may not make some playlists, but Texans wouldn't have been able to get around without us. So, I've created our own highlight reel from 2013. Here are some of the high points:

**Progress on Texas' next interstate.** This year, we designated South Texas' first interstate. More than 60 miles of U.S. 77 and U.S. 281 in the Rio Grande Valley are now Interstate 69, meaning nearly 140 miles of existing roads in the state bear the I-69 designation.

**A penny saved is one more penny for the pavement.** In 2013, we continued on the course to save tax dollars when and where we could. We added a few more programs to the savings tally, including our Fleet Forward program that will provide updated equipment for employees and yield an annual savings of \$50 million for the department.

**Highway coffers get a bump in pay.** Or so we hope. It took months of protracted debate, but lawmakers finally agreed to a plan that could funnel about \$1.2 billion a year into transportation programs. Under the plan, some oil and gas severance revenue would be transferred from the state's rainy day fund into the state highway fund, but only if voters agree to the switch in an election set for next November.

**Highway workers finally get a brake.** SB 510, which passed this session, added TxDOT vehicles to the state's existing Move Over/Slow Down law. The bill requires drivers to either move over one lane or slow down when approaching a TxDOT vehicle that displays its flashing lights.

**TxDOT: where safety is job one.** This last fiscal year, we achieved the lowest number of recordable injuries in the department's 96-year history. The all-injury rate is also the lowest it's ever been. And with your help, we're expanding the safety arc for employees by requiring that they conduct a 360-degree walk-around of their vehicles and use a spotter in backing-up maneuvers.

2013 is also the year we learned some valuable lessons. We announced plans to convert paved roads in energy production areas and transition some state roads to local control. We believed then — and still do — that these are the safest, most cost-efficient options for the state. Some cities and counties took issue with those proposals, and asked that we and they review other options. We agreed, and we welcome the dialogues.

Thank you for all that you have done to make 2013 so successful, and I'm looking forward to our accomplishments in 2014. 

**Phil Wilson**  
Executive Director



*TxDOT photo*



TN MAGAZINE NOV – DEC 2013

**CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

Bob Kaufman

**COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION**

**DIRECTOR**

Jess Blackburn

**EDITOR**

Brent Dollar

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Claudia Perez

**FEATURE WRITERS**

Rosemary Barnes

Phyllis Chandler-Gordon

Ann Hatchitt

Roman T. Hill

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Bill Powell, Paul Braun,

Blanca Del Valle, Sarah Dupre,

Donna Huerta, Larry Krantz,

Raul Leal, Laura Lopez,

Michael Peters, Deidra Samuels,

Marcus Sandifer, Darah Waldrip,

Lisa Walzl, Kathi White

**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

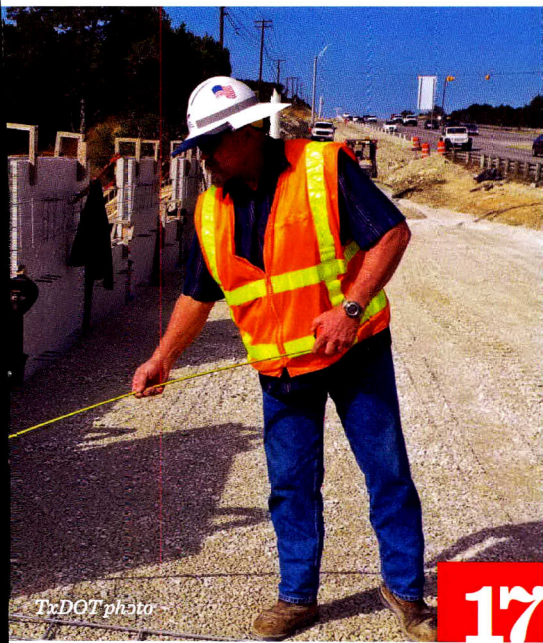
comments about TN?

Email [TNideas@txdot.gov](mailto:TNideas@txdot.gov)

and include "TN Editor"

in the subject line.

© Copyright 2013



17



14



22

**10** Giving Extra Attention With the Extra Mile Awards

**17** The Inspector Development Program

**20** Honoring Military Service Members at TxDOT

**22** I Am A... Railroad Safety Investigator

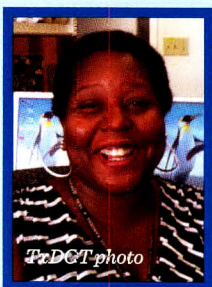
**24** Employee Q&A

## on the cover

TxDOT crew members (clockwise, from top), General Maintenance Technician Randy Johnson, General Maintenance Technician Fene Pinales, Transportation Maintenance Equipment Operator John Buckley and General Maintenance Technician Pedro Muñoz, change out speed limit signs on a stretch of I-35 just south of Austin.

# TxDOT Team Members Chime In

## Black Friday Shopping: Best Deals or Worst Nightmare?



**Rebecca Black**

Administrative Assistant  
Public Transportation  
Division

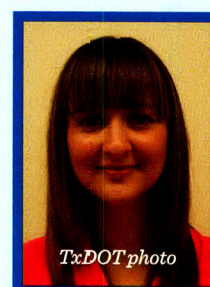
Best deals. I create a list, verify the time the store opens and beg my daughter to go with me so she can keep my attitude in check.



**Norma Andrade**

Design Technician  
San Angelo District

Worst nightmare. Cyber Monday is the way to go. I spend the day in my sweats, lounging on my oversized beanbag.



**Sarah Dupre**

Public Information Officer  
Beaumont District

Best deals. I plan on checking out deals early Thanksgiving morning, and after spending the day with family, I'll be heading into the Toys R Us line.

# 5 THINGS


## FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

**1** TxDOT's redesigned website, TxDOT.gov, was awarded a first-place honor in the category of Website Redesign Without a Consultant at the national 2013 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials TransComm Skills Contest in Grand Rapids, Mich. TxDOT competed with departments of transportation from across the country.

**2** In an effort to help Texas drivers keep their child passengers properly secured, TxDOT is offering free, year-round child safety seat inspections conducted by certified technicians. The inspections are available by appointment at each of TxDOT's 25 district offices. To schedule a safety seat inspection, call a TxDOT district office or find your local contact at [TexasClickforTicket.com](http://TexasClickforTicket.com).

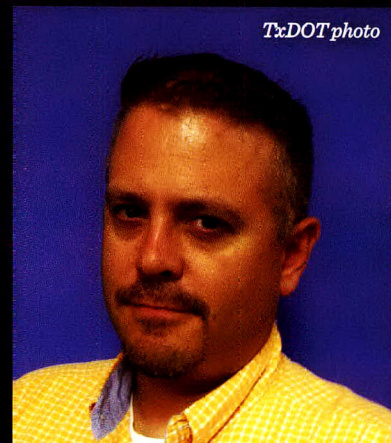
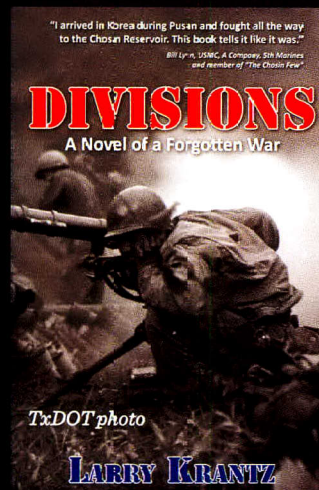
**3** Toribio Garza Jr., a 27-year TxDOT veteran, is the new Pharr District engineer; Dalton Pratt has been named director of the new Fleet Operations Division, overseeing the agency's Fleet Forward initiative; and Erik Steavens is TxDOT's new Rail Division director.

**4** TxDOT has announced the top toll violators and is giving them a deadline to pay their overdue tolls or be included on a list published by the agency. Authority to report the names of violators publicly and other powers were provided by Senate Bill 1792 passed in the recent legislative session. Drivers owe more than \$27 million in unpaid tolls.

**5** Fleet Forward launched a new vehicle mileage reimbursement policy, making it easier to be reimbursed for mileage with a personal vehicle. Although not required, employees may use a personal vehicle for trips that are less than 100 miles round-trip and not to a work site. For longer trips and travel to work sites, a TxDOT fleet vehicle should still be used. However, managers may make exceptions. Visit Crossroad's HRD-Net site to view the announcement. 

# A PIO IS PUBLISHED

TxDOT employee Larry Krantz  
— published his first novel. —



Tyler District Public Information Officer Larry Krantz.

Tyler District Public Information Officer Larry Krantz published his first novel, "Divisions: A Novel of a Forgotten War" this past summer. Set in the opening months of the Korean War, the book follows three main characters as they're thrown into a war the United States wasn't prepared to fight, and the effects of which are still being felt today. The book covers the North Korean invasion across the 38th parallel in June 1950, the September invasion of Incheon, and the icy winter retreat from the Chosin Reservoir.

Krantz, who says he considers himself an amateur military historian, began writing the book in 2010 while visiting family in Ojai, Calif., which is incidentally just a few miles from where the hit TV show "M.A.S.H." was filmed.


"You never really know where inspiration comes from," Krantz said. "But that's where it hit me, and the book started writing itself."

Krantz said "Divisions" will be the first book in a trilogy covering the U.S. involvement in foreign affairs in the early-to-mid 1950s.

"Most Americans' knowledge of military history goes from 'Band of Brothers' to 'Full Metal Jacket,'" Krantz said. "If they know anything at all about Korea, it comes from 'M.A.S.H.'. There's a good 23 years there between the end of World War II and the height of the Vietnam War where the world changed dramatically, but it's rarely covered in American history classes."

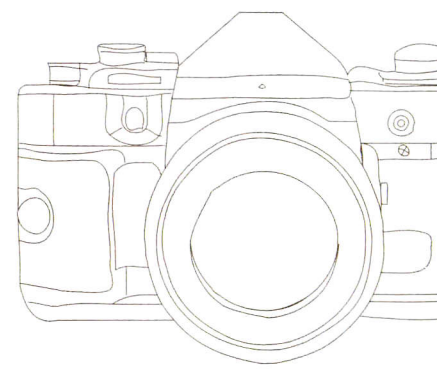
Krantz noted one of the true heroes of the Korean War was a Texan, Lt. Gen. Walton Walker, for whom much of Loop 12 in Dallas is named.

"My hope is that this book honors Korean War veterans for their service by helping to show the role their sacrifice played in shaping the world we live in," he said.

The book is available in paperback on Amazon.com and on Amazon Kindle. 

# BE IN TN'S TOP PICS

*Thank you to all  
the employees who  
sent submissions for  
this issue's Top Pics.*



A special thanks to everyone who submitted photos about the First Day of School.

"Calissa's first day of kindergarten in Weatherford."

**Submitted by: Chad Marbut**  
**Engineering Assistant**  
**Fort Worth District**



"My daughters Emily, 10, and Caroline, 7, on their first day of school in San Antonio. Each year I take a photo of them on their first day of school displaying their grade level with their fingers."


**Submitted by: John Gianotti**  
**Transportation Engineer**  
**San Antonio District**



"This is Caysen and Maddox's first day of first grade in Dodd City."

**Submitted by: Josh Lappin**  
**General Transportation Technician**  
**Dallas District**

For the next issue (Jan/  
Feb), the theme will be  
**"Who's your Valentine?"**

Send us pics of your valentine, whether it's the love of your life or the people you love to spend time with. Your photographs could be featured in the next issue of TN. Please send your submissions to **TNideas@txdot.gov** by Nov. 29. Be sure to include your contact information and share details about the photo subject. 

## SPREADING SAFETY *in Amarillo*



*TxDOT photo*

*Cherise DeLong with the West Accounting Office attempts to navigate the pedal cart course while wearing vision-impairment goggles.*

The Amarillo District held its First Annual Safety Summit in early September. The theme, "Take a Break for Safety's Sake," brought every employee into the district headquarters over a two-day period to focus on safety. Breakout sessions were held hourly and included safety training on heavy equipment operations spotting and backing; slip, trip and fall prevention; power and hand tool safety; strain and sprain prevention; and equipment pre-trip inspection.

The district partnered with local vendors to offer free training sessions. The summit also included a demonstration using a pedal car and vision-impairment goggles, a team-building class, as well as information about the "Get a Physical" campaign. The summit was a great success, and the district looks forward to hosting another safety event next year.

# 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

## TxDOT, UTEP Celebrate Trifecta of Efforts

On Sept. 16, officials with TxDOT and the University of Texas at El Paso gathered to acknowledge three efforts aimed at improving travel and boosting safety for students around the UTEP campus.

The first effort is to widen the current two-lane segment of Sun Bowl Drive to a four-lane roadway that includes a new roundabout at the intersection of Sun Bowl Drive and Glory Road. The second improvement is the expansion of Spur 1966 to provide students a seamless connection from campus to Paisano Drive. And lastly, the Campus Transformation Project seeks to improve circulation and increase safety of pedestrians and cyclists through the creation of walkways, bicycle paths and green spaces. 

*Texas Transportation Commissioner Chairman Ted Houghton, UT System Board of Regents Chairman Paul Foster, UTEP President Diana Natalicio and Rep. Joe Moody celebrate the trifecta of projects aimed at improving safety and travel for UTEP students.*




TxDOT photo

*The city of Laredo and Webb County support the I-69 corridor project which would bring State Loop 20 between U.S. 59 to I-35, and U.S. 59, part of the I-69 corridor, up to interstate highway standards.*

## Loop 20-McPherson Road Overpass Project Past Halfway Mark Toward Completion

The Loop 20-McPherson Road overpass project, part of the I-69 corridor in the Laredo District, is inching toward completion at a rapid rate of construction. SER Construction Partners, LLC began construction in February 2013, and the overpass is slated for completion in January 2014.


To date, approximately 90 percent of the retaining walls have been erected, as well as beam placement for the six bridge spans. 

EL PASO

## Cow Bayou Swing Bridge in Bridge City

Construction will soon begin on a project to restore the Cow Bayou Swing Bridge in Bridge City. The two-lane bridge was built in 1941.

The bridge, one of a few swing bridges left in Texas, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was last opened for a boat to pass in 2003. Gibson & Associates, Inc. will be taking on the \$9.5 million project to restore it to full working order. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2015.

“This project has been in the planning stages for some time now,” said Tucker Ferguson, district engineer for the Beaumont District. “It’s a historic bridge, so it was important that this be a restoration project instead of a rebuild.” 

*The restoration of the 72-year-old Cow Bayou Swing Bridge is to be completed by the end of 2015.*



TxDOT photo

TxDOT photo



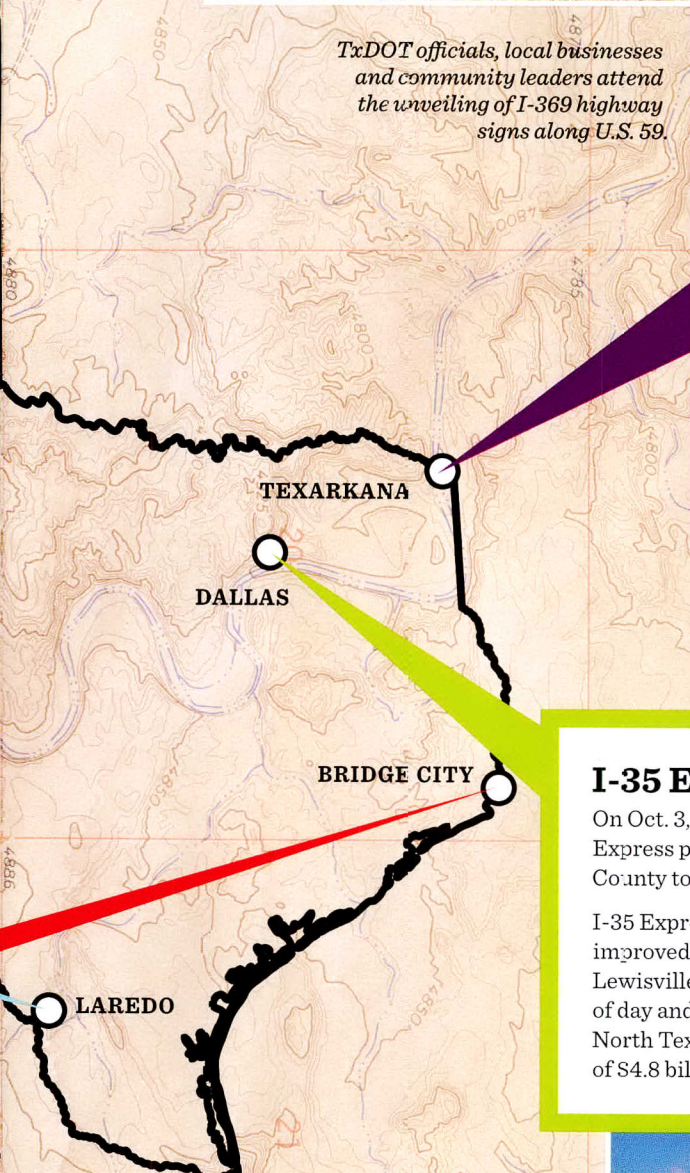
TxDOT officials, local businesses and community leaders attend the unveiling of I-369 highway signs along U.S. 59.

### I-369 Sign Unveiling in Texarkana

More than 150 I-69 enthusiasts gathered at the Texarkana Convention Center on Sept. 23 to celebrate the official expansion of the interstate highway to northeast Texas. Many of the attendees later gathered on the U.S. 59 frontage road for the unveiling of the first official sign designating a section of I-369.

“This marks a milestone for Texas, especially Texarkana, as the signs unveiled today symbolize growth, connectivity and economic development for a critical region of our great state,” said Texas Transportation Commissioner Jeff Austin III.

The new I-369 spur runs along the existing U.S. 59 for 3.5 miles, beginning at I-30 and continuing to South Lake Drive (SH 93). The new I-369 is the second of three interstate highways planned for the Texarkana area to enhance economic development and increase the state’s ability to attract major industries.



### I-35 Express Ground-Breaking Ceremony

On Oct. 3, TxDOT and public officials celebrated the ground breaking of the I-35 Express project. The project extends almost 30 miles, from U.S. 380 in Denton County to I-635 in Dallas County.

I-35 Express will include additional general purpose lanes, managed toll lanes, improved bridges and frontage roads and a new southbound bridge across Lake Lewisville. It will also feature dynamic pricing with the cost varying based on time of day and congestion. One of the most congested roadways in the state, the entire North Texas corridor is being reconstructed in two phases with an estimated cost of \$4.8 billion. Phase 1 is expected to be completed in late 2016.

TxDOT and public officials celebrate the ground breaking of the I-35 Express project on Oct. 3.



TxDOT photo

# Big 5 Awards

Recipients took to the stage to accept applause and appreciation for their outstanding achievements from the attendees of the 87th Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 15 at Texas A&M University. Lawrence Olsen, executive vice president of the Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association, presented the Greer, Gilchrist, Perry, Stotzer and DeBerry awards during the conference's opening session.

## James Koch, Houston District Gibb Gilchrist Award



Houston District Director of Transportation Planning and Development James Koch was awarded the Gibb Gilchrist Award. The award is named for the former state highway engineer who served in the

1920s and 30s, and is presented to honor the performance of an outstanding TxDOT engineer.

Beginning his career at the department in 1987 as the assistant district design engineer in the Brownwood District, Koch rose through the engineering ranks and now oversees the Houston District's planning and design program. After the department was awarded \$2.25 billion in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, he went to work obligating and executing the \$446 million in allocated funds to the district.

When Proposition 12 opened the way for TxDOT to put more projects through the development pipeline, Koch used his district's \$1 billion allocation to relieve congestion on the area's crowded roads and rehabilitate some of the region's aging bridges.

Koch and the Houston District developed a plan to handle gridlock on U.S. 290 — nearly \$5 billion to add new lanes, construct a parallel tollway and add a transit corridor. Funding issues, however, forced a phased implementation of the project. Working with the Harris County Toll Authority, Koch and his team developed an interim plan that would save time and money, and bring congestion relief to commuters much sooner than originally planned.

Together, he and the authority cobbled together a plan that would require TxDOT to provide the bulk of the new \$1.8 billion project cost; the toll authority would provide about \$400 million for improvements. The entire stretch of U.S. 290 between Loop 610 and SH 6 could be completed within four years.

Not only is he successful at leading and guiding TxDOT personnel and helping them achieve their goals, he works closely with municipal governments, toll road authorities and the public to solidify working relationships.

## Michael Taylor, Amarillo District Dewitt C. Greer Award



Director of Operations Michael Taylor of the Amarillo District won this year's Dewitt C. Greer Award. The award is named after Greer, who served as state highway engineer, Transportation

Commission member and Commission chair. It recognizes the skill and dedication of TxDOT engineers.

Committed to improving transportation in the Panhandle Plains, Taylor was asked several years ago to improve the communications and operations of winter storm operations for that region. He took the challenge head-on, and developed a set of procedures that have been copied in other areas of the state.

A believer that communication is key to successfully managing winter storm events, he rallied the necessary resources and personnel to make sure travelers could reach their destinations safely when a large storm threatened the Amarillo District region in 2009.

It is because of Taylor's commitment that a five-state group from Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas was formed and continues to meet annually to share best practices and plan for the next winter storm season.

The net effect of Taylor's work over the past five years to improve TxDOT's communication, skill and coordination to battle winter storms continues to make a positive impact.

## Judge Glen Whitley, Tarrant County Russell H. Perry Award



Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley is the recipient of the 2013 Russell H. Perry Award. The award recognizes citizens for their leadership in creating public awareness of the need for adequate transportation in the state.

Whitley has been a leader in supporting public-private partnerships. Because of his consensus building with North Texas officials, more than \$16 billion in projects in the Metroplex are being constructed using this type of funding, including more than \$7 billion on the western side of the Metroplex alone.

Here is the proof of his dedication: The \$1.4 billion Chisholm Trail Parkway project will open next year after 40 years of planning. The \$1.1 billion DFW Connector, that rebuilt five interchanges where four of the area's most populated counties merge, officially celebrated its opening this past August, nine months ahead of schedule — and 11 years sooner than would have been possible had traditional funding been used.

Plus, the North Tarrant Express (NTE), a series of major highway improvements from south of DFW International Airport to I-35W,





TxDOT photo

*Big 5 Award winners (from left to right): Amarillo District Director of Operations Michael Taylor, Houston District Director of Transportation Planning and Development James Koch, Austin District Deputy District Engineer Terry McCoy, Bryan District Maintenance Section Supervisor Bobby Wells and Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley.*

## **Bobby Wells, Bryan District Raymond E. Stotzer Award**



The Raymond E. Stotzer Award was presented to Bryan District Maintenance

Section Supervisor Bobby Wells. The Stotzer Award is given to a TxDOT non-engineer who demonstrates outstanding leadership, dedication and service to the department.


With nearly a three-decade career with the department, Wells embodies the qualities that came to bear especially during evacuation efforts during Hurricane Rita in September 2005.

When Houston and Galveston officials gave the order to leave the area prior to landfall of the hurricane, everyone expected traffic out of the region to be heavy. But no one could have imagined just how heavy.

I-45, I-10, and U.S. 290 were the major evacuation roads out of the region. Three weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, drivers took to the roads in record numbers because of Hurricane Rita.

Fueled mostly by the horrific images of what happened in New Orleans a short time before, drivers in Houston and Beaumont and other coastal cities loaded up every wheeled vehicle they could find, creating unimaginable traffic jams.

When the decision was made to bring in fuel to drivers stalled in heavy traffic, Wells managed the process that employed TxDOT workers from around the state, as well as private contractors, to provide small amounts of fuel and water to drivers. He also worked with the Huntsville prison system and contractors to get the right of way cleared, cleaned and restored before citizens made their trek back home.

Wells is known by his colleagues for his leadership and dedication. He mentors his employees to be future leaders, and provides guidance and advice to new maintenance supervisors in his district. 

is on track to open by 2015. Thanks to a coalition between Whitley, TxDOT, local business and community leaders and other elected officials, the NTE will soon be extended south on I-35W to downtown Fort Worth.

Whitley has championed for improvements to the SH 360 corridor in southeast Tarrant County, encouraging TxDOT and the North Texas Tollway Authority to explore innovative delivery methods to continue progress on the project.

In 2006 he also led a successful effort to pass a \$200 million local transportation bond package. It marked the first time that Tarrant County voters were asked to approve a bond measure to improve local roads and bridges.

## **Terry McCoy, Austin District Luther DeBerry Award**



Deputy District Engineer Terry McCoy of the Austin District is this year's winner of the Luther DeBerry Award. The award is presented to an employee who has made an outstanding contribution to the state of Texas in the field of transportation. DeBerry was the state highway engineer from 1973 to 1980.

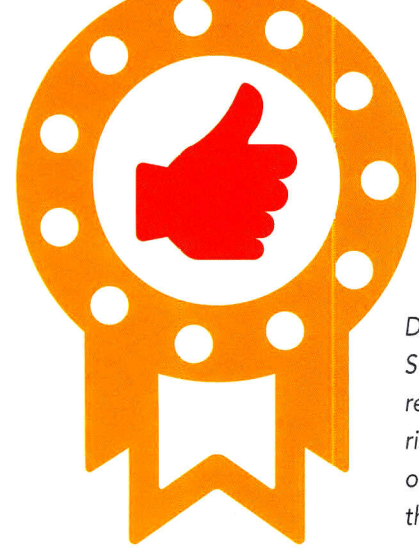
Throughout a nearly quarter-century career, McCoy has worked hard to improve mobility and safety for drivers in the Austin District, all while pushing for better use of the state's increasingly scarce highway funding.

He has played a key role in improving I-35. While stationed at the New Braunfels Area Office as a design engineer, he led a team of employees to redesign a 7-mile segment of the interstate that cost more than \$100 million. His determination, attitude and "take no prisoners" approach to getting the project done on time, earned him the nickname "Chuck Norris" by his peers.

McCoy is known around the state for his ability to reach consensus with and foster positive working relationships with stakeholder groups including local governments, elected officials, community leaders, business leaders and resource agencies.

In recent years, he led the department's liaison team with developers of the Formula 1 racing track in Central Texas. When the track was first proposed to be built, local leaders and TxDOT officials quickly realized that the location would challenge nearby state and local road systems. McCoy worked with both county officials and track officials to help minimize delays for race goers.

**Watch the video of these Big 5 Award recipients and the entire 87th Annual Transportation Short Course presentation on Crossroads.**



# Extra Mile AWARDS

*During the 87th Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 15, TxDOT recognized employees who went above and beyond the call of duty to help people in need, in some cases risking their own lives. The Extra Mile Awards are presented to TxDOT workers who have helped save a life or prevented a situation from becoming life-threatening, either while performing their TxDOT duties or on their own time. The Extra Mile Awards were presented by Deputy Executive Director John Barton.*

## LUIS BENAVIDES AND GUS GUSTAVUS BRYAN DISTRICT

This past January, Luis Benavides and Gus Gustavus, both general transportation technicians in the Bryan District, had just been dispatched to remove debris along U.S. 190. As they continued westbound along the highway, they noticed traffic was beginning to slow down.

Benavides pulled over to the shoulder to see what was holding up traffic. He saw that two cars rounding a double s-curve had hit head on. The cab of one of the vehicles, a Chevy pickup, was engulfed in fire; the second car was wedged to the Chevy's bumper.

Grabbing a fire extinguisher, Benavides approached the pickup. He looked inside and saw a woman. He directed the fire extinguisher toward the base of the fire and pulled the pin. Gustavus tugged on the door's handle. It wouldn't open. Benavides ran to the TxDOT truck and back to the Chevy, emptying a second canister on the burning truck, but the fire was too strong. They both knew there was no way to put the fire out and save the woman inside, so they turned their attention to the second car.

Fortunately, the second car had not caught on fire, but the driver was still pinned inside. Gustavus immediately got back inside the TxDOT truck and pulled it behind the car. Benavides attached a strap to the Dodge's back bumper. Gustavus slowly backed the TxDOT truck away, and the car broke free, and he pulled it away from the burning pickup truck.

Police and fire personnel finally arrived, and transported the driver to the hospital. The man died an hour later from his injuries. And the woman in the pickup truck was pronounced dead at the scene.

The truly tragic part of this story is that while Benavides and Gustavus thought they were helping two strangers that day, Gustavus discovered that the young woman who had been trapped in the pickup truck was his stepdaughter, Paula Reed Caldwell.

"I know that Luis and Gus did everything they could to save both drivers. Thank you for literally walking into harm's way. Thank you both for going the extra mile," said Barton. "And Gus, on behalf of every TxDOT employee, let me offer you my condolences. I will not pretend to know what you and your family have gone through, but know this: your TxDOT family grieves with you, and we are here for you."

## LARRY GAMBOL CHILDRESS DISTRICT

October 15, 2012 began as a routine day for Equipment Operator Larry Gambol with the Childress District's maintenance office. Gambol, who retired this past August, had been assigned the temporary task of inspecting the work of the county's contract mowers. A little while into his shift, he heard on the radio that an ambulance had been called to a one-vehicle crash at the intersection of FM 2465 and U.S. 83 in Childress County.

He drove to the crash site to find out if the sheriff needed help with traffic control. When he arrived, the ambulance still had not shown up, but another motorist who called in the emergency was there and saw what happened. A pickup truck that had been in front of her just a few minutes before, suddenly lost control, left the road, and was now out of sight. It was hidden behind some trees in the distance.

The front end and hood of the truck were mangled, but the driver was still inside the cab, alive but dazed. Gambol reached the driver and asked him not to move; help would be there shortly. That's when he noticed thick, black smoke coming from under the hood. He ran to the front of the truck and tried to open the hood to disconnect the battery, hoping that would stop any chance of a spark. It wouldn't budge. The smoke under the hood was now turning into flames. Gambol ran back to the driver's door and immediately pulled the driver from the truck.

"This story, however, does have a happy ending," said Barton. "The driver recovered from his injuries, and Larry walked away a hero. Even a mundane day can turn out miraculous for those TxDOT employees who go the extra mile."



First row (from left to right): Lufkin District General Transportation Technician Charles Ellison, Childress District Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Smith, Childress District Maintenance Section Assistant Darrell Reynolds, Childress District General Transportation Technician Stan Gamble, Bryan District General Transportation Technician Gus Gustavus, Fort Worth District General Transportation Technician Paul Loving, Project Management Office's Portfolio Management and Reporting Section Director Maureen Wakeland and Fort Worth District General Transportation Technician Abe Jackson.

Back row (from left to right): Lufkin District Maintenance Section Assistant Hoy Clark, Bryan District General Transportation Technician Luis Benavides, Childress District General Transportation Technician Scott Perkins, Galveston Ferry Maintenance Technician Alphonso Marullo Jr., Odessa District Maintenance Section Supervisor Doug Paup, Galveston Ferry Deckhand Candy Rohachek, Lufkin District General Transportation Technician Albert Lane, Lufkin District Office Manager Tamara Bennett, Lufkin District Maintenance Supervisor Rocky White and Lufkin District General Transportation Technician Justin Harrison.

Not pictured: Lufkin District General Transportation Technician Randy West, retired Childress District Equipment Operator Larry Gambol and Lufkin District Equipment Mechanic Cody Duffey.

## DARRELL REYNOLDS, SCOTT PERKINS, STAN GAMBLE AND JEFF SMITH CHILDRESS DISTRICT

On Feb. 25 of this year, TxDOT crews had been on the job for hours, plowing the 13 inches of snow that had covered the roads in Silverton, but when the storm dropped visibility to zero, crews were called back to the warehouse to wait until conditions improved.

Briscoe County Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Smith had just pulled an all-night shift, and had gone home to catch a few winks before reporting back to the job. He couldn't sleep knowing that employees were still up and hard at work. Smith decided to head back to work.

Just as he parked his TxDOT truck in front of the warehouse, he heard a radio call that an ambulance from nearby Quitaque had been transporting a critically injured man to a hospital in another town. Because of the snow and strong winds, the ambulance couldn't make the complete journey and decided to take the patient to Silverton where he could be transported the rest of the way.

After getting the SOS from the Silverton EMT, Smith dispatched his assistant maintenance section supervisor, Darrell Reynolds, to the ambulance bay. With blade in tow, Reynolds began to move the snow from the front door's entrance. Finally clear, the ambulance driver began the trip.

Several miles away from Lockney, the ambulance got stuck in the snow and couldn't travel any further. Another SOS call came in to Smith's office. Maintenance Technician Scott Perkins got the rescue call this time. He untangled the ambulance from the snow, and bladed several miles of road to clear a path to nearby Lockney, the closest hospital to their location. But the blade gave way, and both the ambulance and Perkins were stuck. Perkins radioed back to the warehouse.

Fortunately, Maintenance Technician Stan Gamble wasn't far away. Using a front-end loader, Perkins managed to dig the two vehicles out of the snow, and by then, the Floyd County Fire Department arrived and took the patient the rest of the trip.

"Jeff, Darrell, Scott and Stan, thanks for meeting nature head on – and winning. You make TxDOT best in class," said Barton.

Watch the video of these Extra Mile Award recipients and the entire 87th Annual Transportation Short Course presentation on Crossroads.

Continued on page 12



# Extra Mile AWARDS

## PAUL LOVING AND ABE JACKSON FORT WORTH DISTRICT

On a chilly December day in 2012, Paul Loving and Abe Jackson, both maintenance technicians, were traveling on Interstate 20 between Fort Worth and Benbrook. As they drove along the westbound interstate, they noticed that cars were wildly swerving in the road up ahead. And smoke was billowing from underneath the Clear Fork Trinity River Bridge.

Both men quickly learned from witnesses that a tractor trailer had lost control, entered the median, hit another vehicle, and both dropped several feet below between the east- and westbound bridges.

Loving ran to the edge of the westbound bridge and looked down to find the 18-wheeler on its side. It was beginning to smoke. The wrecked car was close by. While he made his way down the slope, Jackson quickly set up traffic control to keep the other drivers safe and cleared a path so emergency personnel could get to the scene.

Turning his attention to the truck, Loving saw that the smoke had turned into fire, and the driver was still inside. He and a passing motorist reached in, but the driver was pinned inside.

Drivers on top of the interstate started to pass down fire extinguishers, anything they could find to stop the blaze. Loving was able to pull the driver's leg free and others quickly carried the driver away from the truck. Just as they did, one of the truck's fuel tanks exploded.

"Fortunately, the driver's injuries weren't life threatening, but this could certainly have had a different outcome had it not been for Paul and Abe's heroic and quick actions that day," said Barton. "Thank you, gentlemen for going the extra mile."

## CINDY ROHACEK AND ALPHONSO W. MARULLO JR. HOUSTON DISTRICT

It was April 7 and a typical day at the Galveston Ferry. Deckhand Cindy Rohacek, Ferry Maintenance Technician William Marullo and the crew of the John W. Johnson were going about their daily routines when they received a disturbing call on the radio.

A car had plowed into the ferry landings on the Bolivar side. Water from burst pipes was sprinkling the landing floor, and electrical wires were left exposed from the crash. The driver was uninjured, but without warning, the man dove – head first – into Galveston Bay.

While emergency personnel on the mainland sped to the ferry landing, Coast Guard officials were making their way to the scene. The crew from the JWW, the closest boat to the landing, headed out to search for the missing driver. Rohacek was the first to spot him. She radioed the captain as the ferry anchored. She made several attempts to throw life rings to the man and told him the lifeboat would get to him soon. However, the man would not swim toward a ring.

Marullo and his crew on the small lifeboat raced out to save the man, but as soon as they got close, the man swam away. After they were able to coax him inside the lifeboat, they sailed back to the ferry where the Galveston County sheriff's deputies were waiting for him. He was eventually charged with criminal mischief for causing about \$6,000 in damages to the ferry landing.

"Although our little tale doesn't have a happy legal ending for the driver, he is still very much alive – and probably a lot wiser – thanks to Cindy and William's unwavering persistence," said Barton. "Thank you both for going the extra mile."



## SABINE COUNTY MAINTENANCE OFFICE LUFKIN DISTRICT

The Sabine County Maintenance Office crews were out doing edge seal work on FM 2024 the afternoon of Feb. 21. Weather forecasters issued a tornado warning for an area just south of where the crew was stationed. Supervisor Rocky White cautioned his team to get back to the office as soon as they could. Just then, a call came in from the Sabine County Sheriff's Office saying the weather turned worse.

As the crew – Hoy Clark, Cody Duffey, Charles Ellison, Justin Harrison, Albert Lane, Clint Smith and Randy West – started the clean-up, they heard a car stop nearby. A woman got out, frantically asking them for help clearing the roads. A sudden tornado had touched down, leaving some of the roads into her community blocked. She was sure that one of her neighbors was trapped inside her home. White called the district office for permission, and the team set off for the tiny town of Strickland Crossing.

When they got there they found several homes were destroyed, trees had been uprooted and trailers and boats overturned. White and his team quickly went to work, and began clearing the roads of trees and other debris. Office Manager Tammie Bennett coordinated the work between White's crew and other district teams that had come to help. Within 45 minutes after they arrived, TxDOT crews cleared the roads, making it possible for the sheriff's office and other emergency crews to enter.

"Our thanks to the Sabine County Maintenance Office for going the extra mile," said Barton.

## DOUG PAUP ODESSA DISTRICT

In September 2012, Tropical Storm Miriam broke the Permian Basin drought. In one day, the Odessa area got nearly 3 inches of rain in about seven hours. Odessa Maintenance Supervisor Doug Paup had his crew out early securing the flooded areas. The ground, already saturated from the rain, and the city's poor drainage system caused some area roads to be submerged.

Paup stationed himself at Eastridge Road, and coned off the road, but not all motorists heeded the visual warning. As the TxDOT crew went from vehicle to vehicle, one gentleman in an SUV drove past the cones and into the rising flood waters. The vehicle was quickly swept into a nearby ditch.

With water nearing 6 feet around him, the inside of the vehicle was starting to flood. Paup instructed the man to stay calm. The water was beginning to recede. The man, however, tried to get out of his vehicle, but he couldn't swim. It wasn't long before he was struggling to keep his head above the rushing water. Paup wasted no time and finally reached the scared driver and carried him back to the side of the road.

"Risking your life to save the life of another," said Barton, "seems to me that's the definition of going the extra mile."


## MAUREEN WAKELAND PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Late on a Sunday night in March, Maureen Wakeland, director of the Portfolio Management and Reporting Section in the Project Management Office and her son Michael were traveling on SH 71 on their way back to Austin from Houston. About 30 miles from Austin, something in the middle of the road caught Michael's eye. Before Michael could say anything, Maureen saw it, too. She slowed down and as they got closer they saw that it was a body lying in the middle of the road.

Wakeland and the car next to her stopped, forcing traffic behind them to grind to a halt. Her son reached for the phone and called 911. Wakeland turned on her hazard lights, and asked Michael to make sure no other cars tried to pass. She got out of her car, and she could see it was a young woman.

As she knelt over her, she could see that the woman was unconscious, but still alive. She was badly bruised with cuts covering her body. Fortunately, the driver of the other car that was blocking traffic was a doctor, and walked her through first aid step by step.

EMS finally arrived and took the young woman to the hospital. Wakeland was later told that the woman made a full recovery, but the story could have had a far more tragic ending that night.

"Thank you, Maureen, for proving that good Samaritans do exist today, and thank you for going the extra mile," said Barton. 



# Safety On The Front

*Move Over/Slow Down law now covers TxDOT.*

Every day, TxDOT's roadside crews across the state work hard repairing signs, patching potholes and picking up debris while building and maintaining the state's roadways. They often work within feet, if not inches, from fast-moving vehicles, and are not separated from traffic by concrete structures or other barriers.

"You always have to be aware and watch out for your fellow employees, especially while working so close to the shoulder of the road. This is why 'safety first' is so important," said Rene Pinales, a general transportation technician with the Austin District's San Marcos Maintenance Office.

Tragically, since 1938, more than 100 TxDOT employees have been struck and killed by motorists. Five of these fatalities occurred within the last 10 years. And as recently as June 2013, a TxDOT employee, who was part of a road crew replacing a highway exit sign, was struck and killed by a motorist in El Paso.

"It takes only a second for something to go wrong — only a second," said Pinales. "A few years ago, while working on a sign, I put some of my tools on the ground near the grass. As I was walking to my truck, a vehicle speeding by ran them over."

During the Legislature's last regular session, three state representatives, Rep. Ruth Jones McClendon, D-San Antonio, Rep. Armando Martinez, D-Weslaco and Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville, took up the cause of highway worker safety by proposing the amendment to the state's Move Over/Slow Down law. Gov. Rick Perry signed the bill in May, and the law went into effect Sept. 1.

According to the National Safety Council, 49 states have move-over laws in place. These laws are intended to protect the driving public, emergency responders and transportation

workers by requiring drivers to take precautionary measures when passing authorized vehicles that have lights flashing.

Texas' Move Over/Slow Down law aims to protect TxDOT's front-line workers, adding further protection to the already strict safety protocols for the department's road crews.

"We follow several safety precautions when performing maintenance work. We use an impact attenuator or crash cushion on the back of our trucks, activate the blue and amber overhead lights, make sure we face traffic while working, and always, always watch out and communicate with each other," said Transportation Maintenance Equipment Operator John Buckley, also with the Austin District.

In Texas, the law was first passed in 2003, and applied to police, fire and emergency medical service vehicles. In 2011, tow trucks were added. TxDOT vehicles are now included under its protection.

The law requires drivers to change lanes or reduce speed 20 miles per hour below the posted speed limit when approaching TxDOT vehicles that are stopped with overhead flashing blue or amber lights activated.

"The best way for the public to keep our crews safe is to give them more room," said Occupational Safety Division Director Jerral Wyer. "Drivers should only move over to another lane when there is an adjacent lane. If it is not possible to move over safely, drivers need to slow down."

Drivers are urged to do their part to obey speed limits and pay full attention to the road. Violators can receive a ticket with a fine of up to \$500. If there is a crash that causes injury to the worker, violators can be fined up to \$2,000.


To help raise awareness of the new law, TxDOT launched a statewide campaign focusing on the Move Over/Slow Down law's new requirements.

# Outline

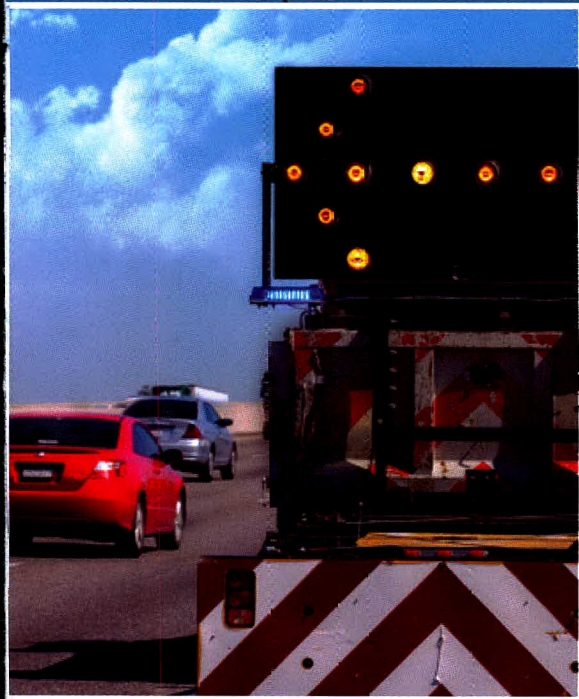
“The goal of the campaign is to protect TxDOT workers and to reduce the number of preventable crashes, fatalities and injuries,” said Traffic Operations Division Director Carol Rawson. “We want to make sure drivers know that they are required to take these precautionary measures to help keep our employees safe.”

Throughout the month of August, TxDOT aired radio announcements and placed messages on billboards and gas pumps across the state. In addition, the department used social media, signage and posters at TxDOT safety rest areas, vehicle decals and dynamic message signs along state highways to raise awareness of the law. Two television public service announcements will run through December, and the department is also promoting the new law through district offices.

“I’m glad the law is in place, and my hope is that drivers become more aware that we are there, working beside the road,” said Buckley. “It’s also good to see DPS enforcing the law, too.”

Safety is TxDOT’s number one priority, and the new Move Over/Slow Down law will help the department prevent injuries and fatalities. And while the new law increases protection for roadside crew employees, the department continues to look for ways to remind everyone of its critical, life-saving importance. 

***Listen to the “TxDOT Podcast” with Rep. Armando Martinez and his thoughts regarding how a move-over law affects the security of law enforcement and emergency-response personnel called to work on the highway by visiting [TxDOT.gov](http://TxDOT.gov).***



## A FEW YEARS AGO,

the department identified the need to standardize data management, lower risk and create better efficiency and improved responsiveness in the environmental process. A diverse team of TxDOT staff, including Environmental Division (ENV) business analysts, IT and ENV project managers and IT developers was assembled to provide an innovative solution.

Over a two-year period, the team developed the Environmental Compliance and Oversight System (ECOS), a tool that creates the potential to automate future environmental management initiatives, including the proposed integration with data systems at state and federal resource agencies. ECOS is a one-stop software application to monitor the progress of environmental projects, implement processes and archive data from project planning to closure. Its flexibility greatly improves project on-time deliveries and provides fiscal readiness in a regulatory environment with ever-changing business processes and mandates.


ECOS went live statewide on Sept. 1 and immediately garnered praise. Personnel in the Dallas District called ECOS “an extremely valuable asset to our environmental process, as it has improved and streamlined our work. We use it as the official file of record for our environmental projects such as scopes, risk assessments and resource agency coordination. We also find ECOS very valuable for audit purposes and for full compliance of all federal and state environmental regulations.”

Not only does ECOS serve as the official file of record for all future TxDOT projects, it connects TxDOT operations across functional areas and state agencies, including Texas Parks and Wildlife and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The system provides enhanced functionality for projects that encompass air, archeology, biology, water, history, pollution, prevention, abatement, public involvement, hazmat and noise elements.

Our congratulations to the ECOS team for a job well done: Brian Foster, Rama Kondadsu, Ravi Kiran, Priscilla Ortuno, Troy D. Sykes, SaiKiran Kolla, Joyce Velazquez, Frank Villarreal and Harris Reddy.

## ECOS HIGHLIGHTS

- Updates instantly; project dashboard replaces the manual process.
- Integrates with legacy mainframe systems and Microsoft Outlook for automatic notifications on project changes to users.
- Interfaces with TxDOT-issued iPads enabling users to document information while in the field.


- Eliminates paper processes and provides automated collaborative communications between consultants and TxDOT.
- Facilitates legally required environmental scoping; automates stakeholder agreement on tasks and schedules.
- Archives all documentation for ENV and FHWA review electronically; eliminates production and transmission of paper copies of extensive project files. 

# TxDOT TAKES WORK ZONE SAFETY AWARD



The American Road & Transportation Builders Association handed out its 15th annual Roadway Work Zone Safety Awareness Awards in September, honoring four state transportation departments and their outreach campaigns and training programs.

TxDOT was named second place winner in the “Outreach Campaign/State Level” category for its “Be Safe. Drive Smart.” campaign. TxDOT, in partnership with law enforcement, launched the campaign to urge drivers to buckle up; drive a safe speed; pass carefully; always stop at red lights and stop signs; and avoid using cell phones while driving. The safety messages were delivered in a variety of different ways, including paid advertising on television, radio, billboards and gas pumps.

The awards program, open to all organizations and individuals, recognizes programs, education campaigns and innovations in technology that demonstrate excellence in promoting safety in roadway construction zones. 



# PASSING DOWN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

## THE INSPECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



The IDP team includes (from left to right): Frank Mayfield from Houston, Johnny Johnson from Lufkin, Scott Starkjohann from Austin, Noe Cabazos from Corpus Christi and Juan Ortega from Laredo.

In a perfect world, every new TxDOT inspector would be matched with an experienced mentor. However, as seasoned inspectors retire, there aren't enough inspectors to provide valuable one-on-one learning experiences to those new to the field. Because of this, in 2007 TxDOT established the Inspector Development Program (IDP) to foster the future success and mentoring of new department inspectors.


"The IDP provides direction and support along with field and classroom training to help inspectors meet the high demand for inspection on our construction projects," said Construction Division Field Engineering Specialist Scott Starkjohann, who has been on the IDP team since it was established.

TxDOT inspectors carry the heavy load of ensuring that transportation projects meet the high standards set in the specifications, and as with any job, past experience is tremendously important.

"The IDP provides on-the-job experience that new inspectors can't get from books and training," said Waco Engineering Technician Hunter Plumlee. "I still call those guys when I have a question or when I come upon a situation that I haven't seen before."

With retirements and transfers, only Starkjohann remains from the original IDP team. However, Engineering Specialists Frank Mayfield, Johnny Johnson, Juan Ortega and Noe Cabazos joined Starkjohann last year. As a team, they work regionally to support the districts with staff members based in Austin, Houston, Corpus Christi, Lufkin and Laredo. Most of the training is done at the area office level.

"We want to be available to the new inspectors when they need us," said Starkjohann. "One of our goals is to answer inspectors' questions the same day or find someone who can. A lot of employees call us because they know we will get answers quickly."

The IDP Web page on the Construction Division website offers information on many aspects of inspection. The team helped to implement the iPad pilot program, which put more than 100 iPads in the hands of inspectors in the field. They have also created a YouTube channel, where they post short training videos to provide information on various inspection issues. Additionally, the team developed and teaches a Site Manager class for inspectors and record keepers. 



NINTH ANNUAL  
TEXAS  
TRANSPORTATION  
FORUM

## LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FORUM

GET READY FOR THE 9TH ANNUAL TEXAS TRANSPORTATION FORUM

Register now for the 9th Annual Texas Transportation Forum. The theme of this year's conference is "Simplicity — providing simple solutions for complex problems through the use of new tools and technology."

The Transportation Forum is scheduled for Jan. 6-8, 2014 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Antonio. Registration for the Forum is now open.

The annual event offers transportation industry experts, policy makers and business leaders opportunities to learn, network and exchange ideas about the future of transportation.

If you are interested in attending the Transportation Forum, planning ahead can save you money. Early registration, at a cost of \$225 for government participants, ends Nov. 13. Regular registration at \$325 ends Jan. 1, 2014, and on-site registration Jan. 6-8, 2014 will be \$375.

More information about the Forum can be found at [www.TexasTransportationForum.com](http://www.TexasTransportationForum.com). 

# PUTTING SAFETY FIRST PAYS OFF


## TxDOT RECORDS LOWEST NUMBER OF INJURIES IN 2013

Effectively educating, training and encouraging safety in all aspects of our diverse work operations is a huge undertaking. The department's leaders hope the message is clear. The expectation is that employees embrace a culture of safety and make it a part of their daily life activities. It is a tribute to employees when their efforts and commitment emerge and transcend from personal commitment, to teammates, to organizational achievement and to success as a department.

On Aug. 31, 2013, TxDOT marked a significant milestone in its ongoing Safety: Mission Zero journey toward being an incident- and injury-free agency. In fiscal year 2013, TxDOT recorded its lowest number of injuries in its 96-year history: 216 injuries. This is a notable success story attributable to department employees. As a point of reference, in 1984, TxDOT recorded nearly 1,600 injuries. The number of injuries since then has continuously declined. This outstanding achievement reaffirms the department's commitment to safety as our number one priority and demonstrates that we "walk the talk" when it comes to safe working practices.

This accomplishment is a direct result of the employees' personal ownership of safety, a commitment to teamwork, strong management support and continuous program improvements. Our safety record is something we can all be proud of and is a great indicator that we are on track toward zero. As we celebrate this milestone, we must continue to focus on safety and avoid complacency. Safety is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year commitment.

"We can always do better. And if we hope to achieve our goal of being a best-in-class agency, we have to lead by example when it comes to safety," said Executive Director Phil Wilson.

So, with the right attitude and our uncompromising approach toward safety, we are confident that we can maintain and improve our safety performance in all areas of TxDOT. Congratulations TxDOT for this excellent achievement. Keep up the good work. 

**4** DISTRICTS | REGIONS  
"FIELD" DIVISION  
**ZERO** INJURIES

Childress | West Region  
North Region | Construction Division

DISTRICTS | REGIONS  
"FIELD" DIVISION  
**NO LOST-TIME** INJURIES  
**NO LOST PRODUCTION** DAYS

Brownwood | Atlanta | South Region  
Pharr | Paris | West Region  
North Region | Childress | Construction Division  
East Region | San Antonio

**2** DISTRICTS  
**ZERO** BACKING INCIDENTS  
Laredo | San Angelo

**7** DISTRICTS  
**1 LOST-TIME** INJURY

Abilene | Lufkin | Wichita Falls  
Bryan | Odessa  
Corpus Christi | Tyler

TxDOT photo



The project, TxDOT's first public-private partnership to open in North Texas, doubles the capacity of the existing highway from 12 to 24 lanes.

TxDOT photo



The DFW Connector is an 8-mile highway that connects SH 114 and SH 121 and adjacent roadways located north of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.


# DFW CONNECTOR CLOSER TO COMPLETION

Making highways bigger and better is part of the job at TxDOT, but finishing a project ahead of schedule carries its own reward. On Aug. 21, 2013, federal, state and local officials came together just north of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport to celebrate the DFW Connector reaching substantial completion, well ahead of the original summer 2014 deadline.

The connector spans eight miles, includes multiple major interchanges and has doubled the current capacity, which reaches 180,000 drivers each day.

While the project has reached substantial completion, meaning all lanes of traffic are in their permanent configuration, punch-list items will continue through the end of the year.

TxDOT partnered with NorthGate Constructors and used a design-build approach to provide more flexibility, speed up construction timelines and save money. It is the first TxDOT project in North Texas to reach completion with this delivery method.

The project will also be one of the first in Texas to use TEXpress lanes that feature dynamic tolling designed to keep traffic moving at 50 mph. The public can choose to drive these lanes on four miles of SH 114 at an estimated cost of 16 cents per mile. 

# NEW APP CONNECTS STUDENTS TO SOBER RIDES



TxDOT photo




Hundreds of college-aged students in Texas lose their lives each year due to drunk driving, and TxDOT continues its efforts to help students recognize the dangers and consequences of getting behind the wheel after drinking.

TxDOT's new P.A.S.S. (Person Appointed to Stay Sober) app offers college students a solution to the problem of getting home safely after drinking alcohol at parties or other events. The P.A.S.S. app is a Facebook-integrated application that can be accessed from a smartphone to help students plan ahead for sober rides home.

Students at three test market schools – the University of North Texas, Midwestern State University and the University of Texas at Brownsville – are promoting the P.A.S.S. app during the 2013-2014 school year.

The P.A.S.S. app helps users coordinate sober rides through Facebook's event planning tool. Once a Facebook event has been created, friends can locate sober drivers through the app, figure out how many passengers the driver can carry and even pitch in for gas.

In 2012, there were 7,096 motor vehicle crashes in Texas involving drivers between the ages of 18 and 24 who were under the influence of alcohol. Those crashes led to 2,181 serious injuries and 231 fatalities.

Students can download the P.A.S.S. app at [www.thepassapp.com](http://www.thepassapp.com). For more information, visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TxDOT](http://www.facebook.com/TxDOT). 

Students at the University of Texas at Brownsville pose for photos at an event promoting TxDOT's new P.A.S.S. (Person Appointed to Stay Sober) Facebook application.

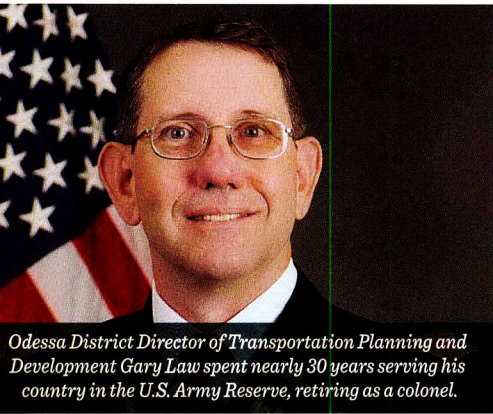
# THANK YOU ★

## FOR YOUR SERVICE

### HONORING TxDOT'S MILITARY VETERANS



*On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, we honor those who have served our country in the armed forces to protect our freedom and liberty here at home. At TxDOT, more than 1,000 current employees are veterans, and five former service members shared their stories with us. To all of our TxDOT family members who are veterans, we say thank you.*



#### **COL. GARY J. LAW**

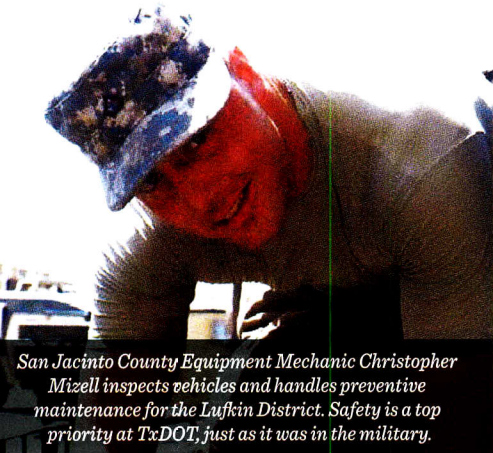
*U.S. Army Reserve*

“As citizen-soldiers, we serve with people from all walks of life — college students, school teachers, single parents and many young professionals just beginning their civilian careers,” said Law. “One day we are civilians serving our country part time; the next day, we are soldiers going to war.”

Law deployed to Iraq in 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II and to Afghanistan in 2008 for Operation Enduring Freedom. He then returned to active duty in 2011 to serve as commander of 3rd Group, 1st Brigade, 75th Training Division and served at various installations across the United States.

“For citizen-soldiers, we leave our families behind, but we also leave behind our employers and colleagues, who step in and fill the void until we return,” said Law. “To me, their support was equal in commitment to our nation as my personal service, and I want to thank my TxDOT family, especially in the Odessa District, for their support.”

*Odessa District Director of Transportation Planning and Development Gary Law spent nearly 30 years serving his country in the U.S. Army Reserve, retiring as a colonel.*



#### **SPC. CHRISTOPHER MIZELL**

*U.S. Army*

Christopher Mizell, a mechanic for the Lufkin District's San Jacinto County Maintenance Office, was a light wheel mechanic in the U.S. Army and served two tours of duty in Iraq.

Mizell enlisted in September 2004 and went through basic training at Fort Jackson, N.C., where he trained as a mechanic with 63 Bravo. He was stationed with the 3rd CosCom Support Battalion Unit in Weisbaden, Germany when he was deployed to Iraq in September 2005 for 11 months. He also spent 10 months in Germany and Fort Carson, Colo., before starting his second assignment in Iraq in September 2007 with the 1-6 Cav.

Had he not collapsed outside his quarters in August 2008, Mizell said he would have continued his tour. Illness necessitated him being honorably discharged in Oct. 2010.

“I would go back again if I could,” Mizell said. “I was proud to protect my country. Knowing what the soldiers who served before me had given through their service, it was a great honor for me to give back to them and our country.”

*San Jacinto County Equipment Mechanic Christopher Mizell inspects vehicles and handles preventive maintenance for the Lufkin District. Safety is a top priority at TxDOT, just as it was in the military.*



#### **SGT. 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS ANSELMO VELA**

*Texas National Guard Reserve*

Anselmo Vela enlisted in the Texas National Guard Reserve in 1988 and was assigned to Delta Company 2-142 Infantry 49th Division out of Wellington, Texas in a field artillery unit. Two weeks of training each year and one weekend a month defined his first 16 years of service, throwing grenades, sending a wide variety of weapons and firing massive howitzers shooting projectiles nearly 20 miles.

His army infantry unit was responsible for clearing main service roads of IEDs (improvised explosive devices) to ensure convoys of troops and supplies could get through safely to the front lines. A fellow service member from his unit was killed during Vela's first tour and several others injured during the second tour.

“I feel proud to serve my country and blessed to return home safely,” said Vela.

*Transportation Maintenance Heavy Equipment Operator Moe Vela of the Amarillo District served two overseas tours of duty in Iraq, the first in 2004 and the second in 2008, as well as two additional tours in the United States.*

# SENDING CARE ACROSS THE GLOBE



*Revenue Accounting Specialist Coleta Dille served her country in the U.S. Air Force from 1986 to 1991 in assignments throughout the United States.*

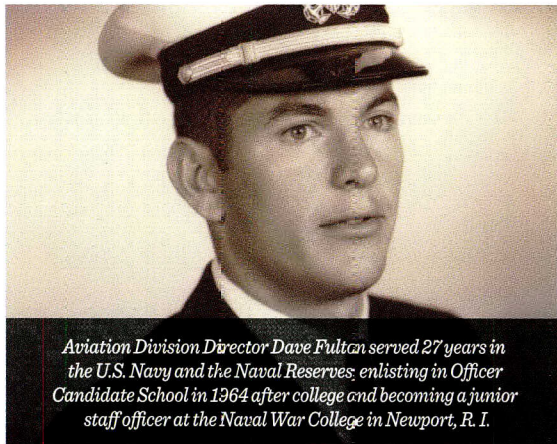
## SENIOR AIRMAN COLETA DILLE

*U.S. Air Force*

TxDOT Revenue Accounting Specialist Coleta Dille grew up in the service, spending her formative years as the child of a U.S. Army officer at Fort Hood. Her father and two brothers were Army soldiers, but when Dille decided she wanted to enlist, she chose a different path and joined the U.S. Air Force in 1986.

"I felt like I was making a contribution to my country," said Dille. "I look back on those years, and I am so proud that I was able to serve."

Her Air Force journey took her to San Antonio for basic training, Biloxi, Miss. for technical training, and bases in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Maryland. Dille served five years at Bergstrom Air Force Base in Austin, working in administrative support roles and retired from the service in 1991.



*Aviation Division Director Dave Fulton served 27 years in the U.S. Navy and the Naval Reserves, enlisting in Officer Candidate School in 1964 after college and becoming a junior staff officer at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.*


## CAPT. DAVID FULTON

*U.S. Navy*

Aviation Division Director Dave Fulton keeps his worn flight log books in his office, reminders of his 27 years of service to the country in the U.S. Navy. Fulton was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy following graduation from Officer Candidate School in 1964. He served a brief tour as a junior staff officer at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., but it was the opportunity to enter Navy Flight Training School that changed his life.

"It fit me like a glove," said Fulton, who earned the rank of captain before he retired from the Navy. Fulton flew anti-submarine warfare patrols during the Cold War and missions in the South Pacific during the Vietnam War. He then spent three years as a flight instructor at the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi.

"Sometimes, I have dreams that I'm still a young naval aviator," Fulton said.

Fulton earned his MBA and law degree on the GI Bill. The Navy truly defines the man he is, and TxDOT benefits each day from his experiences in the service. 



*San Antonio District Transportation Specialist Bill Trefzer recently returned in July 2013 from deployment in Kabul, Afghanistan.*


## BILL TREFZER | CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ARMY RESERVE NATIONAL GUARD

Bill Trefzer, a transportation specialist with the San Antonio District Maintenance Office, was deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan on June 30, 2012. As chief warrant officer in the Army Reserve National Guard's Engineering Branch, Trefzer was in charge of all construction in Kabul. He designed and oversaw existing projects; conducted technical evaluations on contractor proposals; and inspected, trained and assisted many soldiers on the progress of their work.

As a token of appreciation for serving his country and being part of the TxDOT family, his TxDOT co-workers put together a care package that added up to seven boxes for his unit.

"I felt like a liaison of TxDOT. My entire unit was based out of Texas, and they were very big on anything Texas. To them, no other state comes else," said Trefzer. "To receive something from employees of a state agency was very rewarding to them."

The most popular item Trefzer and his unit received was the "Texas Highways" magazine. "They really enjoyed reading 'Texas Highways,'" said Trefzer. "It brought them close to home. They could relate to the places, and the magazines were pretty worn from getting passed around so much."

Trefzer recently returned back to work in the San Antonio District on July 15, 2013 and presented the district with a U.S. flag that was flown at Camp Phoenix in Afghanistan. 



*Trefzer's co-workers sent seven care packages to his unit in Afghanistan that contained snacks, drink mixes, gum, candy, writing material, spices, games, reading material, toiletries and more.*

## Railroad Safety Investigator

Erick Leslie, a railroad safety investigator with the Rail Division, joined TxDOT five years ago, bringing more than 15 years of experience from CSX Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration. Married to Sonja for 24 years, they are proud parents of two sons, Derrick, 23, who is a railroad dispatcher and Elijah, 21, who is an insurance services agent.

### WHAT DOES A RAILROAD SAFETY INVESTIGATOR DO?

We inspect for compliance with federal laws, regulations, rules and standards, as well as conduct accident investigations and create reports of findings for correction of unsafe conditions. We also ensure compliance from railroad employees, rail yards, track and equipment.

Affecting safety is the most important duty of every railroad safety investigator. Our focus is the overall safety of the citizens of Texas, and the performance of our duties is how we accomplish this goal.

### WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR JOB IS MOST ENJOYABLE?

I find interacting with people on a personal level and having a vested interest in them enjoyable, especially for their safe return to loved ones at the end of the day. Knowing that my contributions today can effect tomorrow's outcome is rewarding.

### BEST PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL REWARD?

After presenting a safety seminar to an outside organization, a young man who was dining with his wife and three children introduced me to his family as, "The man that helps daddy get home safely every day." Every time this husband and father approaches a railroad crossing, he thinks of the safety message, "Go home to your loved ones the same way they sent you."


### HOW DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS?

We examine railroad and federal records, using historical data to identify trends and shortcomings, as well as collect daily information from interaction with and listening to railroad employees to ensure compliance and safety.

We attempt to make the right and most safe decision each day. We strive to put as much emphasis on the safety of railroad employees, as the president of the United States does in his daily decision making process for our country.

The success of our program helps to place things in perspective — we are all a small, but important part of the overall solution.

### ANY RECENT RECOGNITION?

Our program has been rated tops for the past three years by the Federal Railroad Administration. The railroad investigative team at TxDOT is tops in the business and shows no signs of turning the reigns over! 



**ERICK LESLIE**

TEXT. CR

# EMPLOYEE

# Q&A

with Ted East

**What does a transportation specialist do?** My job duties include performing speed zone and accident studies, reviewing plans for signing and traffic control, and handling concerns from citizens. I often meet with citizens on site to evaluate the situation and recommend improvements that could be made.

**Where's your favorite place to travel to in Texas?** We like the New Braunfels and San Antonio areas for things such as Schlitterbahn and the River Walk.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** I like meeting the public to work through problems they may be having regarding traffic issues.

**Where's your favorite place to go on a date night?** My wife and I like to go to new restaurants that aren't noisy like buffets. We like quiet places that allow us to talk without having problems hearing each other.

**Holiday turkey: roasted or deep-fried?** I prefer my wife's roasted turkey because she's an excellent cook.

**Ever have the urge to "twerk"?** I've gone "twerk" at TxDOT for 33 years.

**Why is your district the best at TxDOT?** I think our district leaders are what make the difference. They have a strong sense of ethics, and they always do what's right for the public we serve.

**What's the most unusual gift you've ever received?** A re-gifted fruitcake.

**Is it OK to put up holiday lights before Thanksgiving?** I think it's OK during the long weekend after Thanksgiving but not before.

## Ted East


### Beaumont District Transportation Specialist

Ted East is a 33-year TxDOT veteran and a transportation specialist in the Beaumont District's Transportation Operations Section. Married for 36 years to his wife Gretchen, they live in Beaumont and have two grown children, Brandon and Stephanie. He started his career with TxDOT after working toward a business degree at Lamar University and working as a metallurgical lab technician at a local steel mill.



**What unique holiday tradition does your family have?** We like to go to midnight Mass and then, if the kids are home for the holidays, we'll wait until everyone goes to bed to put all of the packages out.

**Who are you thankful for?** I count my blessings every day for my wife, Gretchen. She does a lot for others and always has a smile. She even gave her sister one of her kidneys. I feel like I won the "wife lottery" when I married her.

**How is your district making TxDOT a best-in-class agency?** Each area in our district is dedicated to doing what's right for the public and doing the most with the limited resources we have. 



# Where Am I?

Here is a photo depicting an identifiable landmark you may have seen in your travels around Texas. If you think you know what this is a photo of and/or where it was taken, please send an email to [TNideas@txdot.gov](mailto:TNideas@txdot.gov). Deadline for guesses is Nov. 29.



TxDOT photo

**Identified:** Congratulations to our official first identifier for last issue's Where Am I? quiz: Lyndol Irby of the Travel Information Division. The statue represents discovery of the first Africanized bee in the U.S. outside of Hidalgo. The fiberglass and steel bee is adjacent to the city offices.

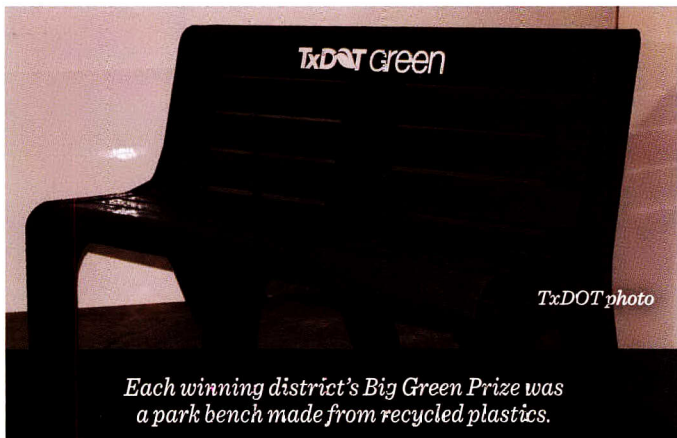
Others correctly identifying the photo were: Chris Cowen (BRY), Ricardo De La Parra (LRD), Karen Draw (LBB), Romualdo Mena (PHR), Stanley Ramos (PHR), and retirees, Emmitt Henderson and Zeke Perez.



TxDOT photo

## TxDOT AWARDS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

### *The Big Green Prize*




TxDOT photo

*Each winning district's Big Green Prize was a park bench made from recycled plastics.*

In August, TxDOT's Recycling Program awarded its first Big Green Prize to the top three earth-friendly districts, in recognition for their outstanding efforts to protect the environment.

The Atlanta District encouraged staff to reduce their daily water use to 40 gallons per day, a 57-percent decrease from the average use per person. The Brownwood District eliminated the use of Styrofoam cups in their break area, expanding on their already comprehensive recycling program. By collecting and recycling computer equipment from employees, citizens and local businesses, the San Angelo District reduced the amount of waste in area landfills.

Congratulations to the Atlanta, Brownwood and San Angelo districts for their earth-friendly programs! 

# MILESTONES

## September 2013 Service Awards



### District:

#### Abilene

- 20 Larry D. McIntire
- 15 James H. Smith
- 5 Kevin D. Taylor

#### Atlanta

- 20 Lance W. Simmons
- 20 Barbara F. Wyatt

#### Austin

- 25 Thomas S. Blackmore
- 25 William K. Dahmann
- 20 Daniel S. Bridges
- 15 Jason L. Brecht
- 15 David R. Franklin
- 15 Mark W. Mohr
- 10 Jason R. Gill
- 10 Roland L. Thompson

#### Beaumont

- 15 Corrie J. Frank
- 5 Andrew C. Lee

#### Brownwood

- 25 Luis O. Herrera

#### Bryan

- 25 Maurice Maness
- 20 Bradley L. Powell
- 5 David G. Amos Jr.
- 5 Nicholas A. Berlan

#### Corpus Christi

- 25 Rodney D. Chesser
- 20 Benito A. Galvan Jr.
- 20 Jose V. Guerra Jr.
- 15 Robert V. Allen
- 15 Eusebio Galvan Jr.
- 15 Adrian Lopez

#### Dallas

- 20 Steven L. Hill
- 20 Yuan Ruo Wang
- 15 Mary E. Lozano
- 15 Teddy C. May
- 10 Lacey G. Rodgers
- 10 Brahma P. Singh
- 5 Justin E. Dotson
- 5 Ashton M. Strong

#### El Paso

- 35 Adolfo H. Mancha
- 25 Roman Gonzalez
- 20 Elizabeth B. Reyes

#### Fort Worth

- 25 Lynn E. Haehn
- 25 Michael D. Isbell
- 25 Alfredo Valles
- 20 Allen Bowie
- 15 Jerry L. Menzdorf
- 15 Juan M. Reyna

#### Houston

- 35 Manuel B. Francisco Jr.
- 25 Melanie M. Martin
- 20 Ghasem A. Arjomandi
- 20 Anna M. Garza-Knoblock
- 20 Leonard E. Polk
- 15 Shawky S. Abushmeis
- 15 Beata G. Kwater
- 15 Joseph M. Martinez
- 10 Charles F. Chipman

#### Laredo

- 20 Juan Gomez
- 20 Claudia S. Gonzalez-Liendo

#### Lubbock

- 35 Gilbert Alvarado
- 15 Kimberly L. Greener
- 15 Trine Soto Jr.

#### Odessa

- 20 Robert L. Flores
- 15 Jesus Banegas Jr.
- 5 Sergio Miranda

#### Paris

- 30 Karl A. Puckett
- 15 Brett A. Bennett

#### Pharr

- 15 Judith D. Garza-Bosquez
- 15 Judy B. Sanchez
- 10 Juan A. Bernal

#### San Angelo

- 25 Candance L. Bierschwale
- 20 Dennis M. Heap II
- 15 John D. Burnett
- 15 Daniel E. Watters

#### San Antonio

- 20 Diane Y. Rausch
- 15 Cindy A. Adami
- 15 De Ann M. Qualls
- 5 Marco A. Galindo
- 5 Carlos A. Villarreal

#### Tyler

- 30 Larne S. Ellis
- 20 James N. Tullos Jr.
- 15 Laura J. Crow

#### Waco

- 25 Jim B. Reed
- 25 Marvin R. Shilling
- 20 Janice M. Jackson
- 20 Michael A. Rhodes
- 5 Dylan K. Tidwell

#### Wichita Falls

- 30 Timothy S. Weber
- 25 George H. Hagemier

#### Yoakum

- 20 Mark C. Netardus
- 15 Richard D. Guerrero
- 10 Robert C. Hale

### Division/ Office/Region:

#### Audit

- 5 Dana L. Reel

#### Bridge

- 15 Michael D. Hyzak
- 15 Joe D. Riba

#### Communications

- 10 Raul Leal

#### Construction

- 20 Bradley F. Hurst
- 10 Alan S. Turpin

#### Contract Services

- 15 Nikki N. Gordon

#### Design

- 15 Paula K. McGinley
- 10 John G. Dulski

#### Finance

- 25 John R. Grogan Jr.
- 20 Donna H. Barnes
- 20 Sylvia V. Mraz
- 15 Amanda S. Gipson-Mitchell
- 15 Linda K. Peavy

#### Fleet Operations

- 20 Janet D. Skamra
- 15 Russell W. Stout
- 15 Roy C. Bell
- 15 Lloyd E. Garrett
- 5 Steven M. Wrona

#### Human Resources

- 15 Theresa M. Sykes
- 15 Norma J. Willman

#### Information

#### Technology

- 25 Lynn Woods
- 20 James P. Pennington

#### Professional

#### Procurement

- 15 Thuy T. Luong

#### Rail

- 5 Erick V. Leslie

#### Right Of Way

- 30 Nelda R. Eureste
- 5 Wendy A. Knox

#### Strategic Projects

- 10 Varuna A. Singh

#### Support Services

- 30 Thomas J. MacMorran Jr.
- 25 Leah J. Rogers

#### Transportation

#### Planning &

#### Programming

- 25 John H. Foster

#### Travel Information

- 20 Albert Garza
- 5 Denise S. Martinez

# October 2013 Service Awards



## District:

### Abilene

- 25 Sandra J. Collins
- 25 George M. Lee Jr.
- 20 William A. Gholson Jr.
- 20 Alan D. Hufstutler
- 15 Andrew C. Graham
- 10 Gary L. Cole

### Amarillo

- 25 Ty Ducheneaux
- 25 Tommy B. Lane
- 20 Otis W. Sanders
- 20 Jimmy L. Traylor
- 15 Berry R. Brooks
- 15 Monty R. Gallagher
- 10 Kit R. Black
- 10 Wesley N. James

### Atlanta

- 35 Teresa A. Willis
- 30 Kenneth P. Williams
- 25 Jay B. Green
- 15 Harold E. Naasz
- 15 Tommy R. Thomas
- 5 Elizabeth J. Taylor

### Austin

- 30 Dale E. Tomanetz
- 25 Eric W. Goertz
- 20 Howard L. Lyons
- 20 Mark W. Mikulenska
- 20 Jay M. O'Donald
- 15 Charles G. Clark
- 15 Larry W. Clements
- 15 James A. Henderson
- 15 Marcus D. Snowden
- 15 Kathy J. Vicknair
- 5 Jon E. Gobert
- 5 Sam J. Tambunga

### Beaumont

- 20 James A. Taylor
- 15 James W. Glover
- 10 John R. Cain
- 5 Carl D. Ray

### Brownwood

- 20 Thomas S. Greer

### Bryan

- 20 Clarence Cooks III
- 10 William H. Killough
- 5 Jeffrey L. Holland

### Childress

- 20 Darl D. Eigenmann

### Corpus Christi

- 25 James M. Guerrero
- 20 Mitzie G. Gibson
- 5 Cesar J. Salinas Jr.

### Dallas

- 25 Gordon J. Moodie
- 20 Paul W. Lewis
- 20 Jay McCurley
- 20 Danny C. Murphy
- 15 Richard D. Rains
- 15 Trinidad Sanchez Jr.
- 10 Jason M. Preslar
- 5 Mark S. Adkins

### El Paso

- 20 Deane J. Schreiber

### Fort Worth

- 25 David E. Wagner
- 20 Mca J. Holland-Gholson
- 20 Johnny W. Spencer
- 20 Tammy J. Townsend-Haehn
- 5 Jesse Reyna

### Houston

- 20 James H. Counts
- 20 Larry R. Whittington
- 15 Randy B. Birdlong
- 15 Maurice A. Johnson
- 15 Boris Klebanskiy
- 15 Samuel A. Kolawole
- 15 Laura V. Lopez
- 15 Lucia L. Lozano
- 10 Muhammad J. Elahi
- 10 Joe D. Stephens

### Laredo

- 15 Ramon T. Gonzalez
- 15 Ruben Rocha

### Lubbock

- 15 Jesus Oltivero

### Lufkin

- 10 John W. Wright Jr.

### Odessa

- 20 Coury J. Joseph
- 20 Sharon K. Oldaker
- 15 Marcelino M. Munoz Jr.

### Paris

- 25 James B. Hutchison III
- 25 Bradley L. Martin
- 15 Jimmy D. White
- 10 Kevin E. Rice

### Pharr

- 5 Candido Bocanegra
- 5 Martin L. Hinojosa

### San Angelo

- 20 Michael S. McGinnis Sr.
- 15 Gary W. Enos
- 10 David Recio
- 5 Richard R. Bautista

### San Antonio

- 30 Judith L. Friesenhahn
- 30 Wayland D. Smith
- 20 Donna M. Hendrick
- 15 David M. Fredricksen
- 15 Christie L. Hill
- 10 James J. Narendorf
- 5 Larry M. Alaka

### Tyler

- 25 William E. Fletcher
- 15 Christine M. Crosby
- 15 Jeffrey A. Wedding
- 10 Ron R. Taylor

### Waco

- 20 Timothy E. Grusendorf
- 20 Marcus W. Yows
- 10 Randy W. Machacek

### Wichita Falls

- 20 Vivian S. Fatheree
- 10 James L. Gill
- 5 Bradley A. Coffman

### Yoakum

- 30 Richard Ayala Jr.
- 30 Paul D. Frerich
- 30 Vickie L. Taylor
- 20 Adolph R. Novosad Jr.
- 15 Patrick G. Grahmann

## Division/ Office/Region:

### Aviation

- 10 Alton D. Turner

### Bridge

- 20 Tom M. Yarbrough
- 10 Wade R. Voges

### Civil Rights

- 15 Ben R. Cocke

### Compliance & Ethics

- 5 Monica A. Aleman-Smoot

### Construction

- 15 Astolfo Rodriguez

### Contract Services

- 20 Richard H. Bohan

### Design

- 15 Mabel L. Wilson

### Environmental Affairs

- 10 Margaret M. Canty

### Finance

- 20 Latrica A. Good
- 10 Christopher P. Loesch

### Fleet Operations

- 15 John P. Dunlap
- 15 Daniel Montes
- 15 James C. Boyer

### Human Resources

- 25 Marie C. Batko
- 20 Overlin Rodriguez
- 15 Anita K. McCamey
- 15 Emma J. McKee
- 15 Trina N. Scott-Smith
- 10 Robert Gomez
- 5 Dorenda S. Thomas

### Occupational Safety

- 15 Zita R. Reyes

### Procurement

- 20 Michele L. Starr
- 15 Andres S. Cuellar
- 15 Jason G. Jones

### Professional Procurement

- 15 Katherine M. De Luna

### Real Estate Management & Development

- 35 Maurilio Aguilar
- 10 John S. Warrick

### Right Of Way

- 15 Ramon Jimenez Jr.
- 15 Mark S. McKinley

### Support Services

- 10 Thomas R. Knippel

## District:

### Amarillo

- 33 Roy D. McGlohon
- 29 Ronald L. Preston
- 18 Richard G. Allen
- 16 Mark J. Roberson

### Atlanta

- 29 Shan T. Wilkins
- 28 Richard B. Bagley
- 16 Meloney J. Berryhill

### Beaumont

- 32 Kar E. Hunter

### Brownwood

- 22 Morris C. Williams
- 20 James M. Moss

### Bryan

- 31 John O. Page Jr.

### Corpus Christi

- 30 Victor Pinon Jr.

### Dallas

- 31 Douglas R. Brock
- 28 Chris W. Behnke
- 19 James R. Hollingsworth
- 17 Jimmy R. Vrzalik

### El Paso

- 27 Jose Corral

### Fort Worth

- 28 Barton S. Wilson
- 21 Nelson J. Wellspeak

### Houston

- 33 John M. Gaynor
- 28 Adrian O. Tamayo

- 27 Larry L. Wong

- 25 Steven B. Troy

### Lufkin

- 40 Robert L. Faver
- 19 Melvin L. Calhoun

### Paris

- 20 Christopher E. Mountain
- 20 Geary D. Allen

### Pharr

- 28 Eduardo Pedraza
- 14 Rogelio Estrada

### San Antonio

- 34 Enes V. Leija
- 29 Lawrence R. Coyle
- 27 Dave H. Gregory
- 26 Alfredo V. Alvizo

### Tyler

- 16 Richard E. Alexander
- 12 Roy M. Lunsford

### Yoakum

- 29 William A. Rowland
- 28 Alan W. Sharp
- 27 Albert C. Grahmann

## Division/ Office/Region:

### Audit

- 11 Dennis W. Olson

### Bridge

- 26 Lloyd M. Wolf

### Communication

- 28 Brenda R. Casmire

### IT Customer Relations

- 38 Dean E. Aaron
- 27 Billy B. Ferguson
- 27 Barbara A. Shepherd
- 27 Martin L. Reese
- 26 Cindy R. Sparks
- 25 Marjorie L. Roberts
- 23 Ray D. Rutledge
- 20 Sam A. Hankla
- 20 Jeffrey M. Sweetland
- 19 Debbi K. Cooke
- 19 Julie K. Frost
- 19 Keith L. Davis
- 17 George G. Rios
- 15 Kevin M. Kalstad
- 13 Mark A. Rodriguez

### IT Operations

- 33 Neil E. Powell
- 27 Gia K. Dirks
- 26 Patrick H. Lea Jr.
- 22 Frank A. Russell
- 22 David J. Smith
- 21 Clarence J. Harris
- 19 Jeffrey A. Vanderaa
- 16 Dwight D. Adams
- 15 Richard A. Bochantin

### IT Project Management

- 20 Diana K. Sullivan
- 1 Suzanne Carter

### IT Services

- 41 Wayman H. Finch
- 29 Juan G. Vinton III
- 28 Susan L. Templeton

- 27 Arnulfo X. Arredondo
- 24 Raymond A. Charnecki
- 24 Madjid Benchouia
- 22 Toni V. Luther
- 20 William D. Gee
- 17 Thomas A. Gunn
- 17 Kaye L. Wade
- 13 Jenho C. Huang
- 13 Chihua Shi

### IT Strategy

- 8 Gerald E. Hayes

### Regional Support Center North

- 35 Rosalie V. Svrcek

### Regional Support Center West

- 37 Charles H. Jones
- 28 Darla R. Mikulik
- 25 David B. Schniers

### Maintenance

- 30 Jimmy N. Munn Jr.

### Occupational Safety

- 15 Nancy J. Basey

### Project Management

- 29 Michael P. Lehmann

### Strategic Projects

- 26 John S. Breed
- 16 Diana L. Jackson
- 11 Rosa E. Lee

### Traffic Operations

- 6 Rebecca S. Woloshen

## UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

**Nov. 11**

Veterans Day  
(All agencies closed)

**Nov. 21**

Texas Transportation  
Commission Meeting (Tyler)

**Nov. 27**

Day before Thanksgiving  
(Minimal Staff Required)

**Nov. 28**

Thanksgiving Holiday  
(All agencies closed)

**Nov. 29**

Day after Thanksgiving  
(All agencies closed)

**Dec. 19**

Texas Transportation  
Commission Meeting  
(Austin)

**Dec. 23**

(Minimal Staff Required)

**Dec. 24**

Christmas Eve Day  
(All Agencies Closed)

**Dec. 25**

Christmas Day  
(All Agencies Closed)

**Dec. 26**

Day after Christmas  
(All Agencies Closed)

## District:

### Abilene

- 36 Mike D. Poteet
- 34 Juan Sanchez
- 30 Herbert E. Bickley
- 29 Christopher A. Hatla
- 27 James E. Washington
- 21 Donnie L. Cornutt
- 13 Jacqueline A. Bosley

### Amarillo

- 31 Lloyd A. Hare Jr.
- 24 Toby D. Bagwell

### Atlanta

- 39 Margarette H. Strawn
- 36 Oliver W. Sparks
- 36 Brad A. Haugh
- 28 David L. Neal Sr.
- 26 Larry D. Whitworth
- 24 Dale C. Swint
- 24 Jeffery K. Weatherford
- 12 David L. Carter

### Austin

- 44 John H. Fohn
- 36 James E. Wilhelm
- 31 Tracy L. House
- 28 Mark J. Seerey
- 28 Antonio M. Moreno Jr.
- 27 Michael Q. Wilson
- 26 Randolph P. Tesch
- 26 William H. Braswell
- 26 Bobby J. Doherty Jr.
- 26 Elba J. Nail
- 21 Joe S. Hennig
- 17 Alcie C. Peterson Jr.

### Beaumont

- 36 John C. Barteo
- 21 Thomas W. Hawthorne

### Bryan

- 34 Paul J. Hightower
- 30 Alonzo V. Butler
- 28 Ricky E. Fischer
- 27 Mark N. Johnston
- 21 Nathan B. White

### Childress

- 28 Jay R. Hurt
- 28 Brent W. Foad
- 27 Robert T. Nelson
- 20 Larry E. Gambol
- 19 Cindy K. Holton
- 16 Charles R. Flemmons

### Corpus Christi

- 39 John M. Jacobs
- 27 John A. Hernandez
- 25 Antonio H. Gonzalez
- 25 Fred J. Hill

### Dallas

- 32 John H. Hicks
- 30 Kyle D. Hill
- 29 Lyle J. Seals
- 29 Leonard E. Lancaster
- 27 Donald L. Carmichael

- 25 Tony L. Seals
- 22 Abbas Mehdibeigi
- 21 Jimmy D. Bertoldo
- 19 Robert K. Davis

### El Paso

- 35 Pablo V. Ramirez
- 34 Martin D. Sandate
- 33 Mary A. Hanson
- 27 John N. Blackman IV
- 27 Chris Carreon
- 27 Lionel R. Salmon
- 20 Gloria Y. Niemeier
- 19 Domingo V. Hernandez

### Fort Worth

- 31 Maribel P. Chavez
- 31 Ronald J. Robinson
- 27 Roy K. Lankford
- 25 Jo Ann Cottrell
- 24 Dennis A. Padgett
- 23 Patrick T. Haley

### Houston

- 34 Roy G. Pippin
- 32 Carlos E. Villalta
- 29 Julian Wisniski
- 29 Mark F. Bathe
- 28 Bernard Baugh
- 28 Edward C. Stelchek
- 27 James R. Craddock
- 27 Dan H. Hale
- 26 Jeffrey L. Suderski
- 25 Clyde R. Jatzlau
- 7 Angel Bijarro

### Laredo

- 19 Carlos A. Ramirez
- 19 Armando Sanchez
- 16 Juan Galvan

### Lubbock

- 37 Daniel G. Hernandez
- 32 Louis Carr
- 31 Michael W. Killough
- 29 Steven L. Hudson
- 26 Robert W. Ratcliff
- 25 Jimmy F. Harris

### Lufkin

- 34 Richard K. Ivy
- 30 Clyde J. Mathews Jr.
- 26 Garry M. Harrison
- 21 Cathy P. Mills
- 20 Eldon T. Hockensmith
- 16 David L. Bryan
- 1 Debra A. Cain

### Odessa

- 44 Phyllis C. Bates
- 31 Joseph A. Alvarado
- 31 Manuel A. Muniz Jr.
- 31 Cleon L. Payton Jr.
- 29 John B. Raschke
- 27 Larry T. Ornelas

### Paris

- 34 Beverly J. Yates
- 27 Felton W. Phillips

- 21 Loyce D. Johnson
- 16 Gustavo Escobedo

### Pharr

- 30 Ramon Sandoval
- 29 Jorge A. Rendon
- 28 Arnoldo H. Trevino
- 27 Eduardo Gonzalez

### San Angelo

- 24 Delmar A. Radde Jr.
- 20 Sandra M. Mach
- 19 Luis P. Ramirez

### San Antonio

- 41 Roland A. Ames
- 40 James M. Hubbard
- 31 Jchn J. Paniagua
- 31 Julia M. Brown
- 31 Daniel S. Silva
- 29 Brian G. Fariello
- 27 Jack E. Persyn
- 27 Cecil E. Loman Jr.
- 25 Jce T. Cantu

### Tyler

- 32 Randall C. Ralson
- 30 Marvin S. Furnish
- 30 Bradley K. Gruetzner
- 19 Donald B. Berry
- 17 Robert D. Hood

### Waco

- 49 Patricia M. Garrison
- 28 Robert W. Kluna Jr.
- 25 Bruce A. Stewart

### Wichita Falls

- 32 Doris A. Withington
- 26 Jon P. Leary

### Yoakum

- 36 John Johnson
- 29 Rodney A. Leopold
- 29 Thomas C. Macha
- 29 Jocelyn M. Bolom
- 28 Randy C. Zimmerman

## Division/ Office/Region:

### Administration

- 27 Carolyn P. Icard
- 15 Kerry D. Hardy

### Audit

- 37 Delton M. Ritter
- 21 Virginia P. Rodriguez

### Bridge

- 27 Sam O. Brooks

### Civil Rights

- 21 Emmitt T. Wilborn Jr.
- 7 Jonathan M. Wilder Jr.

### Construction

- 30 Francisco Guevara Jr.
- 29 Thomas De La Portilla
- 27 Frank Huerta III

### Design

- 20 Ramin Z. Thomasian

### Finance

- 19 Steve L. Bolles

### General Services

- 27 Eddie J. Brown
- 18 Leonard E. Gonzales
- 13 Jamie N. Robinson
- 13 Paula J. Hundley

### Human Resources

- 34 Lisa R. Stone
- 29 Debra J. Heddin
- 19 Brandi L. Rountree
- 15 Dena D. Todd

### Maintenance

- 25 Ulysses Flores
- 14 John F. Mason Jr.

### Occupational Safety

- 27 Martha G. Thompson

### Project

### Management Office

- 26 Mark J. Kusak

### Rail

- 16 Sher Y. Neely

### Regional Support Center East

- 33 Janice R. Robbins
- 25 Thomas S. Nicholes

### Regional Support Center North

- 28 Sharon L. King

### Regional Support Center South

- 34 Juan L. Martinez
- 31 Cathy T. Floyd
- 31 Donald L. Jirkovsky
- 26 Kelly J. Kenner
- 25 Raymond E. Naivar

### Regional Support Center West

- 36 Donna K. Hill
- 29 Maria R. Martinez
- 29 Arnulfo R. Valdez
- 25 Gilberto V. Gonzales
- 14 Catarino Soto

### Right Of Way

- 17 Michael M. Beitler

### Strategic Projects

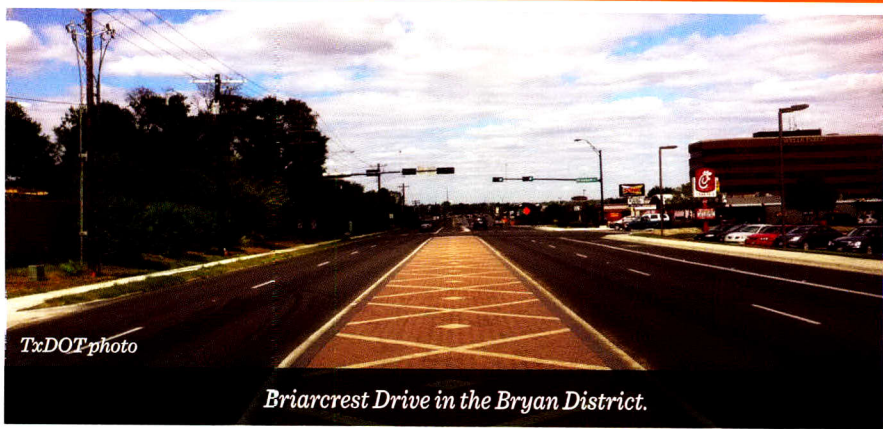
- 31 Clennon D. Rosewell
- 28 Sam E. Swan

### Transportation Planning & Programming

- 32 Herman M. Nelson

# Bright Lights:

## From Bryan District With Thanks

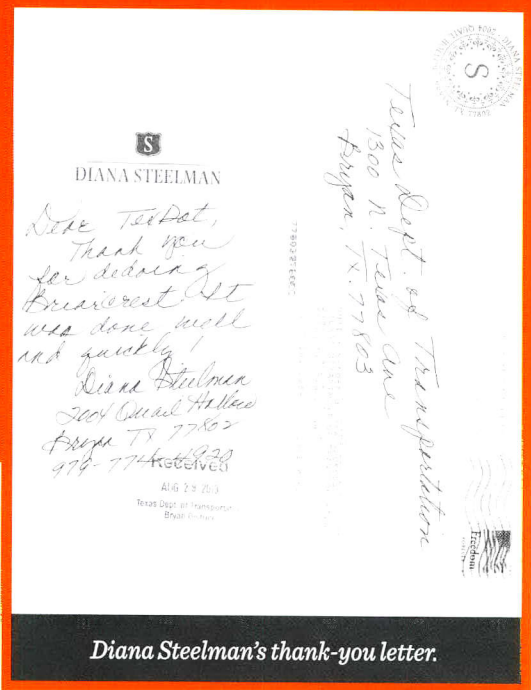


Briarcrest Drive in the Bryan District.

It's fairly routine for districts across the state to field calls and complaints about road construction. Traffic usually gets worse before it gets better during projects, and there isn't a lot anyone can do about it, except work to stay on schedule. But once the transportation system improvement is complete, traffic does get better, but few people, if any, take the time to say thanks.

Diana Steelman was different. This summer, the Bryan resident drove through newly completed work on Briarcrest Drive. She realized the extensive project was already completed and traffic was flowing smoothly. The Bryan District had installed turn lanes, sidewalks on both sides of the roadway and concrete medians. Crews had also upgraded signals along the 2-mile section of roadway.


When she got home, Steelman sat down, pulled out her stationery and wrote a thank you note to the Bryan District for the excellent job on the projects along Briarcrest Drive. She praised the district for a job well done.



Diana Steelman's thank-you letter.

The \$4.7 million project broke ground in September 2012 and was completed on time and on budget. The roadway handles approximately 50,000 vehicles per day. For the district, it was business as usual. However, it's great that someone noticed and took the time to say so.

Mrs. Steelman's letter was featured in **Bright Lights: Where Employees Shine** on Crossroads along with many other letters and emails the public sends to the department to say thanks.

Please send any notes of appreciation that you or your colleagues receive to AskTxDOT, so that we can feature them in Bright Lights as well. 

## In Memoriam

### District:

#### Abilene

**Michael J. Martin**  
Engineering Technician III  
Years of Service: 15  
DOD: 8/4/2013

**Fred Sanchez**  
Engineering Technician II  
Years of Service: 17  
DOD: 7/25/2013

#### Dallas

**Steve M. Tolbert**  
Engineering Technician III  
Years of Service: 20  
DOD: 8/15/2013

#### San Angelo

**Charles E. Forrest**  
Maintenance Technician  
Years of Service: 15  
Retired: 1993  
DOD: 8/2/2013

**Jesus E. Gutierrez**  
Maintenance Technician  
Years of Service: 25  
Retired: 1997  
DOD: 8/12/2013

#### Yoakum

**Frederick L. Eilert**  
Engineering Technician  
Years of Service: 35  
Retired: 1990  
DOD: 8/13/2013

**Albert F. Schoener Jr.**  
Maintenance Technician  
Years of Service: 32  
Retired: 1987  
DOD: 9/6/2013

### Division/ Office/Region

#### Finance

**David E. Williams**  
Program Supervisor VI  
Years of Service: 26  
DOD: 9/2/2013

#### Occupational Safety

**Michele Regis**  
Manager V  
Years of Service: 15  
DOD: 9/9/2013

# STAY IN TOUCH, *Maribel*



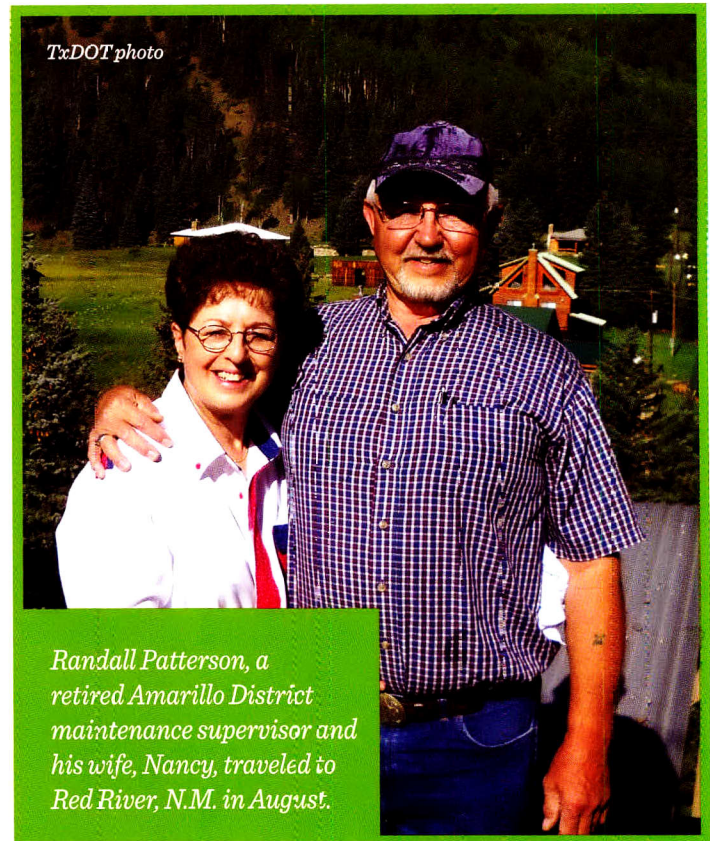
*Deputy Executive Director John Barton and Maribel Chavez, former Fort Worth district engineer. Chavez retired Aug. 30, after 31 years of exceptional service at TxDOT.*

After 31 years of public service to the citizens of Texas, Fort Worth District Engineer Maribel Chavez retired on Aug. 30. More than 200 people attended her reception in Fort Worth, including transportation leaders and elected officials from across the state who lined up to herald her accomplished career.

A TxDOT trailblazer, Maribel was the department's first woman area engineer and district engineer. In Fort Worth, she oversaw the successful delivery of more than \$5 billion in public-private partnerships for the DFW Connector and North Tarrant Express which became a blueprint for the state's success in comprehensive development agreements. Her other key accomplishments include the mammoth Chisholm Trail Parkway project, the I-30 Mobility Improvement Project in Arlington and the West 7th Street bridge, the world's first precast network arch bridge linking downtown Fort Worth with its world-class cultural district.

Over her month-long farewell, Maribel received more than eight proclamations from TxDOT partners who recognized her leadership that has exemplified communication, partnership and innovative ideas between the department, elected officials, community leaders and employees. **TN**

# Where are they now?



*Randall Patterson, a retired Amarillo District maintenance supervisor and his wife, Nancy, traveled to Red River, N.M. in August.*

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

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

**Randall Patterson** was the maintenance supervisor for the Groom and Panhandle Maintenance sections in the Amarillo District. After 38 years of TxDOT service, he retired in 2007.

Patterson has relaxed into the joys of retirement, traveling with his wife, Nancy, at least once every six weeks to visit relatives. He says he retired so he could spend more time with them, as well as his son, Flett, and daughter, Heather. His six grandchildren live in Dallas and Austin. In addition to spending time with his parents, who are in their late 80s and early 90s, he enjoys hunting.

*If there's a retiree you think might be a noteworthy subject for "Where Are They Now?" please send an email to [TNideas@txdot.gov](mailto:TNideas@txdot.gov).*

*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. **TN***



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/>

# THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GIVES A HAND WHEN YOU NEED HELP



A **wap** Program

A huge benefit offered to all TxDOT employees is the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), offered by Alliance Work Partners, at no cost to employees and their household members.

The program provides an opportunity for employees and their immediate family members to receive counseling and assistance for a variety of issues affecting their overall well-being. Getting help is easy, convenient, and confidential. The program's benefits include:

**Law Access** — Legal and financial services provided by a lawyer or financial professional specializing in your area of concern, available online or by phone.

**WorkLife** — Resources and referrals on a number of work/life topics, including but not limited to child and elder care, and health and well-being, all available by phone.

**SafeRide** — Reimbursement for emergency cab fare for eligible employees and dependents that opt to use a cab service instead of driving while impaired.

**Counseling** — Short-term counseling sessions that include assessment, referral and crisis services, as well as up to six sessions per issue per year.

**The EAP offers help with various issues including:**

- Job performance
- Marital difficulties
- Family issues
- Communication skills
- Managing depression and anxiety
- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Child and elder care resources
- Parenting support
- Anger management
- Legal and financial issues
- Grief and bereavement
- Smoking cessation
- Weight loss
- Time management
- Stress management
- Personal concerns
- Career management
- Self-improvement plans

**FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES:**

(888) EAP-INFO (4636)

**TO SPEAK TO A COUNSELOR:**

(800) 343-3822

**EAP TEEN LINE:**

(800) 334-TEEN (8336)

**EN ESPAÑOL:**

(800) 448-1823

**For more information about the EAP, visit the HRD-Net site on Crossroads.**

