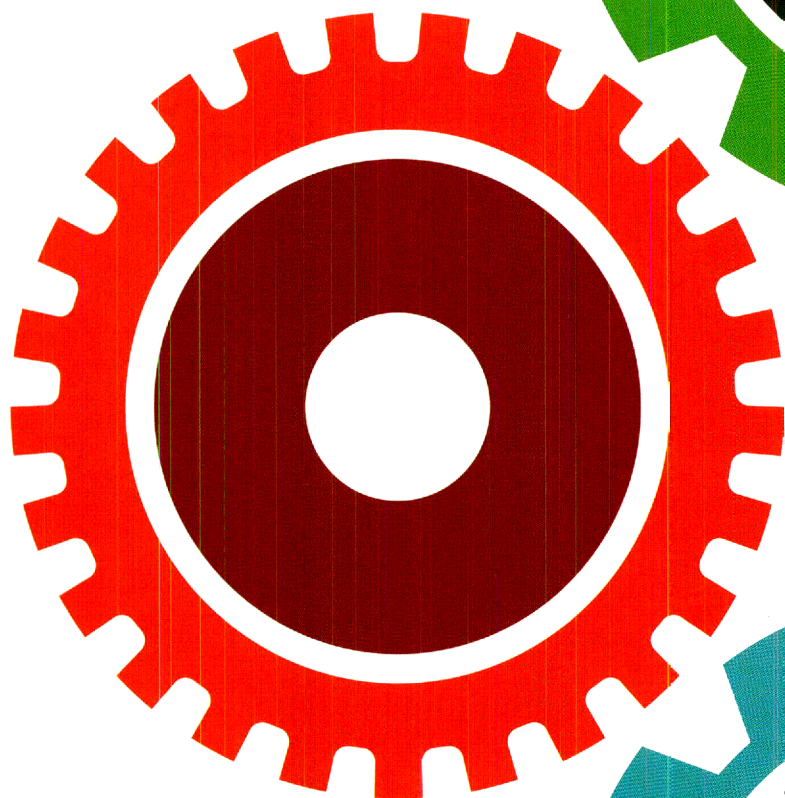


POWERED BY PROP 7

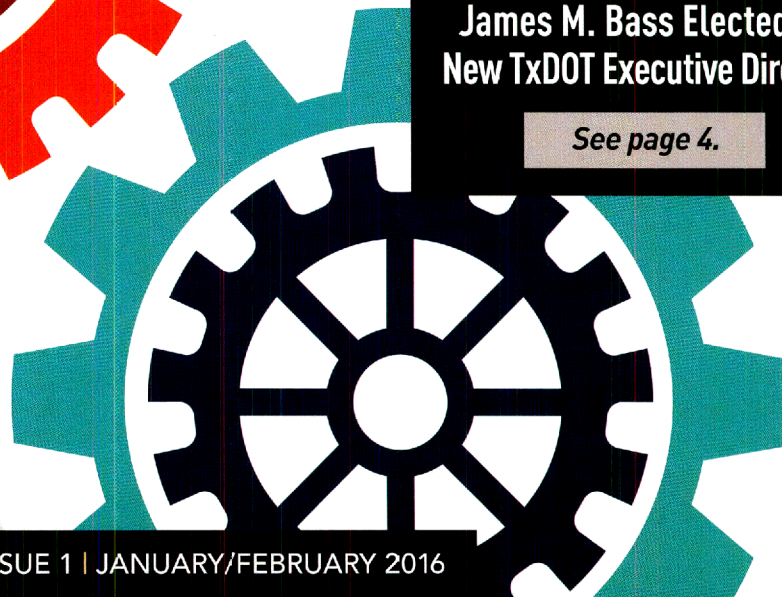


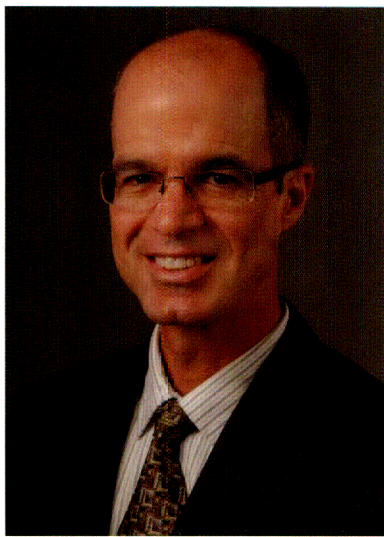
Voters gave Proposition 7 overwhelming approval—and with it, critical funding for the State Highway Fund to turn the gears of Texas transportation.



**James M. Bass Elected As
New TxDOT Executive Director**

See page 4.





**MARC WILLIAMS
INTERIM DEPUTY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

A SPECIAL BRAND OF COMPASSION

A while back, I had the opportunity to recognize some of our employees who participate as volunteers with the local Meals on Wheels and More organization. You've probably heard of it. Each business day, volunteers from all walks of life come together to distribute meals to homebound older adults and people with disabilities.

The group, employees at TxDOT's Austin offices, has been in the meal-delivery business since 1994. Over the years, they have volunteered hundreds of hours and delivered thousands of meals. We even spotlighted their volunteer efforts in the November/December issue of TN.

Besides giving a hot meal to someone in need, these volunteers provide much more to those in their care. They are a friendly face, a listening ear and a warm heart to people who need it the most.

They, like many of you, have a special brand of compassion. You're also heroes off the job. Folks like Jon Adame in the Yoakum District who rallied volunteers in his area to give more than 1,100 people a free Thanksgiving meal last year. Jon even took a week off to prep 68 turkeys, 60 gallons of green beans and all the fixings.

Billy Downing, a 13-year Childress District employee, is a member of the Iron Soldiers Motorcycle Club. His group helps families of fallen military veterans. Chuck Putnam, a construction inspector in the Fort Worth District, helps out with his grandson's Boy Scouts Troop.

When Mary Naverrete-Rodriguez in our Communications Division found out that some of the players on her son's baseball team didn't have the proper equipment to play, she and her family donated bats, gloves and other gear to the team. By the way, the team's already won two tournaments. Time and again our employees show that they aren't afraid to put their lives on the line, volunteering as firefighters in their communities. Folks like Eddie Langford in the Childress District; Alan Migl and Tim Kalich in the Yoakum District; Colby Blaylock, Lance Jenkins, Gary Thigpen and Darren Brown in the Odessa District; Cal Mora, Jacob Longoria and Danny Cox in Corpus Christi; and Bubba Matthews in Tyler.

They, and many of TxDOT's other employees just like them, regularly take the time to put others before themselves. At this time of year, in particular, the selfless attitude of our TxDOT employees makes me proud and humbled to be a part of this special family.

Here's to the hope that our world will experience that kind of caring and compassion in 2016. 



TN MAGAZINE
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2016

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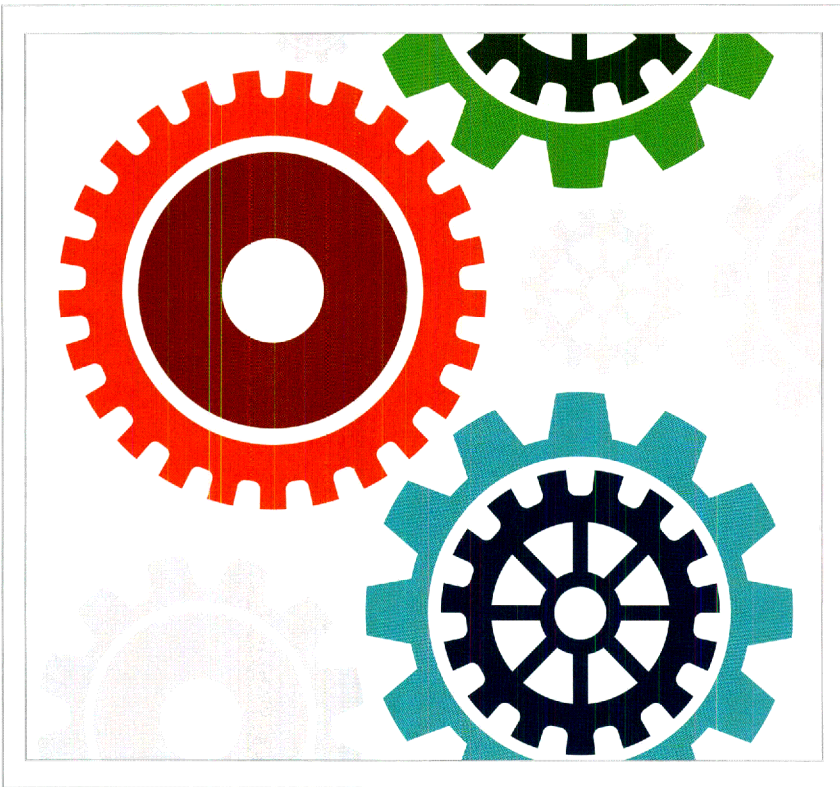
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and include "TN Editor"
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8 ON THE COVER

In November, Texas voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 7. The extra revenue comes at a crucial time.

FEATURED STORIES

10 WorkWise Launches

14 TRUSS BRIDGE PRESERVATION PROJECT



18 Fleet Makes Improvements

22 Texas Highways Sweeps Awards

NEWS AND NOTES

5 TN Reader Survey Results

12 CADDO DISCOVERY IN TYLER DISTRICT



13 Lewis Makes 30 Most Influential Women

13 Communications and Collaborations

16 Travel Time Signs Go Up in Austin

16 Employee Assistance Program

17 Aviation Blanket Project

26 30 Years of Don't mess with Texas

26 My35 Partners for Billboards

27 Snowplows Painted

TN TRADITIONS

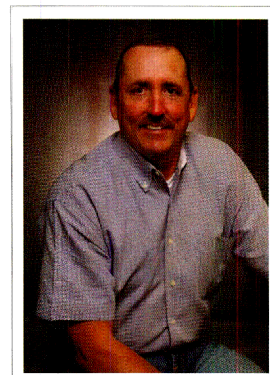
4 5 Things You Should Know Right Now

6 Talk Around the State

24 Employee Q&A

25 Where Am I?

20 I AM A... PAVEMENT ENGINEERING SPECIALIST



25 TxDOT Calendar

28 Milestones and Memoriam

31 TxDOT Chimes In

31 Bright Lights

32 Journey to Wellness

5

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

1 Commission Names James Bass as New Executive Director

The Texas Transportation Commission elected James M. Bass as TxDOT's new executive director, effective Jan. 1, 2016. Under the direction of the Texas Transportation Commission, Bass will be responsible for the strategic direction and overall management of TxDOT's policies and operations. Bass, a 30-year member of the TxDOT family, has served as the department's chief financial officer since 2005. Look for an interview with the new executive director in the next issue of TN.

2 TxDOT receives 2015 National Roadway Safety Award

The Roadway Safety Foundation and the Federal Highway Administration honored TxDOT in November for its San Antonio TransGuide partnership with the San Antonio Police Department to prevent wrong-way crashes on U.S. 281. TxDOT's project was one of 10 recognized with a 2015 National Roadway Safety Award. Working with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, the partners identified a 15-mile segment of U.S. 281 as the corridor with the highest occurrence of wrong-way drivers. TxDOT installed illuminated warning signs and real-time alerts to law enforcement through radar-based sensors that detect the direction, speed and location of wrong-way drivers. Since 2012, the project has decreased the number of wrong-way events by 31 percent.


3 Yoakum District Gets New District Engineer

Paul Reitz is the new district engineer for the Yoakum District effective Nov. 1. Reitz will oversee the planning, designing, building, operation and maintenance of the state transportation system for the 11-county district. Reitz has been the district's director of transportation planning and development since 2012. Before that he served as the Karnes City area engineer. Reitz earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in 1995.

4 New Directors of Office of Civil Rights and Construction Division Named

Michael D. Bryant has been named director of the Office of Civil Rights and Tracy D. Cain has been named director of the Construction Division. Since starting with TxDOT, Bryant has worked on a variety of matters related to the Office of Civil Rights and served as its interim director since last September. Cain has served as the San Angelo District Engineer since 2012 and has been with TxDOT for 26 years.

5 I-35 Section Tops Congested Roadways List

A section of I-35 from U.S. 290 to SH 71 in Austin topped the 2015 list of the 100 most congested roadways in Texas compiled by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. The annual report — commissioned by TxDOT — called a stretch of Houston's I-610 the second-most congested roadway. It was No. 1 last year and I-35 in Austin was No. 2. Two separate sections of U.S. 59 in Houston and a portion of I-35E in Dallas round out this year's top five. See the full report on txdot.gov. 




READERS TELL US

TN MAGAZINE READER SURVEY RESULTS

At its heart, TN Magazine is a news publication, illuminating the work of our team members across the state, while bringing you important information. Key pillars of our mission are making this as accessible and as reliable as possible to our readership.

That was the focus of a recent reader survey, conducted to provide employee feedback that helps the Communications Division plan and improve the content that is featured in TN Magazine.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey. 

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE MORE OF:



Photos

55%



Employee Updates

50%



District News

50%



Featured Articles

37%



Project Updates

33%



HR Updates

31%

ONLINE VIEWING

A big change this year was the shift to a new online publication software, Zmags. Overall, surveyed employees felt this was a great improvement over the previous software, with some formatting issues leaving room for improvement. Changes to the software contributed in part to:

17% increase in magazine readership

21% increase in ability to navigate software

23% increase in overall interest

HOW YOU PREFER TO READ TN:

IPAD/TABLET

2%

.PDF FILE

4%

INTERNET

(TXDOT.GOV)

7%

CROSSROADS

(INTRANET)

33%

HARD COPY

50%

AROUND THE STATE


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

AUSTIN

FM 1460 GROUNDBREAKING IN ROUND ROCK

TxDOT staff joined U.S. Rep. John R. Carter and officials from Williamson County and the cities of Round Rock and Georgetown in October as they celebrated the beginning of construction on Farm-to-Market Road 1460 from Quail Valley Drive to University Boulevard.

The \$21 million project will convert approximately 3.5 miles of an existing two-lane roadway to a five-lane highway from Quail Valley Drive to SE Inner Loop, and a four-lane divided highway from SE Inner Loop to University Boulevard. Once complete, this project will enhance safety and reduce congestion for motorists traveling through the area, especially between the hospitals and higher education facilities in Round Rock and residential and employment areas in Georgetown. The widened highway will also provide a north/south alternate to I-35.

The contractor for the project is OHL USA, Inc. 

Representatives from TxDOT and the cities of Round Rock and Georgetown kick off the road widening project for FM 1460.



LUBBOCK

LOOP 289 PROJECT COMPLETION ENDS NORTHWEST PASSAGE IN LUBBOCK


After five years of construction and more than \$75.3 million in transportation improvements, work on the Northwest Passage projects in Lubbock ended with the completion of the Loop 289, Quaker Avenue/Erskine Street interchange project.

Initiated by the city of Lubbock, in partnership with TxDOT, the series of projects improved mobility in the northwestern area of the city. Planning began in 2004 and construction started in 2009.

“The successful completion of these projects can be attributed to our valued and long-lasting partnership with the city of Lubbock and its leadership,” said Doug Eichorst, Lubbock District engineer. “By considering non-conventional funding options with an open mind and open line of communication, we were able to advance and complete the Northwest Passage projects within the planned time frame.”

Two TxDOT projects on Loop 289 were part of the five Northwest Passage projects.

The \$26.9 million project to widen a portion of Loop 289 from four to six lanes and rebuild the Quaker/Erskine interchange was the final Northwest Passage project.

“The Northwest Passage is a prime example of the great things that can happen when state and local organizations work together,” said Lubbock Mayor Glen Robertson. 



Crews demolished the southbound Quaker Avenue/TTU Parkway bridge on northwest Loop 289 in December 2012 to make room for the new bridges that also span over Erskine Street. The \$26.9 million project widened Loop 289 from four to six lanes.


WURZBACH PARKWAY OPENS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Williams Brothers Construction opened the new lanes of Wurzbach Parkway two months early last October, effectively completing the east-west collection route running across the north-central portion of San Antonio.

The contractor committed extra resources during the final months of the project as project supervisors sought to wrap up early and move to other projects.

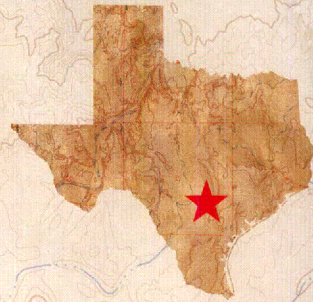
This final segment of Wurzbach Parkway to be finished began in 2011 and runs between West Avenue and Jones-Maltsberger. More than half the 1.7-mile stretch is bridge work lifting the lanes of Wurzbach Parkway over Salado Creek and U.S. 281.

The route will be a viable alternative to I-410 and Loop 1604 for commuters traveling across north San Antonio. For most, however, the route will serve as a collector and expressway that cuts the time on short trips as traffic avoids signalized surface streets.

Completion of this project is the result of more than \$150 million invested by the state at the direction of local leaders, showing the priority of improving connectivity for growing portions of the city. 



SAN ANTONIO




Construction of new lanes for Wurzbach Parkway in San Antonio was completed in October. More than half the 1.7-mile stretch is bridge work lifting the lanes of Wurzbach Parkway over Salado Creek and U.S. 281.

COMMISSION AWARDS LEGACY TRAIL GRANT IN TYLER

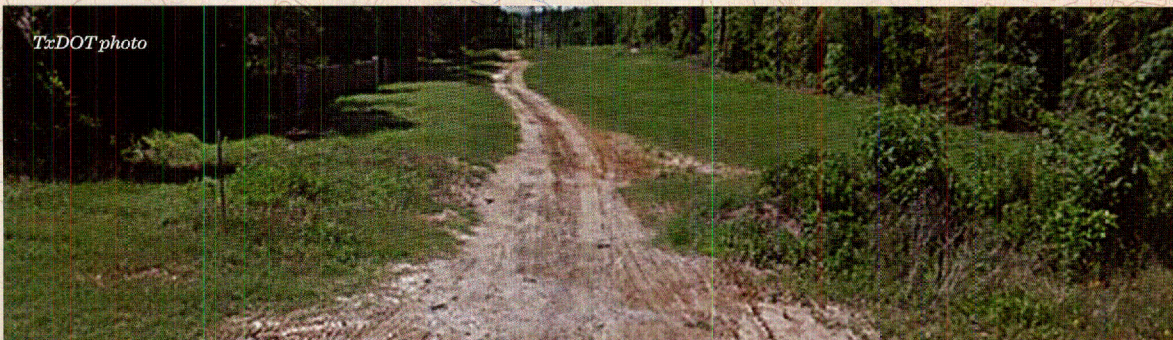
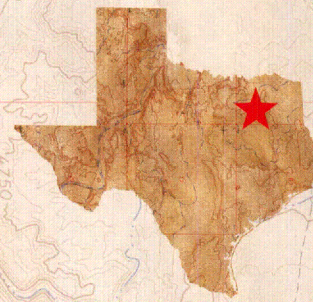
The Texas Transportation Commission awarded more than \$3.5 million in grant funds this past fall to the city of Tyler for a new 3.8-mile multi-use trail.

The Legacy Trail will be a 10-foot-wide concrete facility shared by pedestrians and bicyclists. Construction is expected to start in summer 2017.

“Transportation means efficiently moving people through our communities and state,” said Commissioner Jeff Austin III of the Texas Transportation Commission, who supported the project. “Whether by car, rail, bicycle or on foot, it is important to recognize and develop an array of transportation solutions for the citizens of Texas. I want to commend the city of Tyler on its efforts in establishing and executing a master bicycle plan to improve connectivity throughout the community. Many will benefit from this initiative and I hope other communities look to Tyler as a model for the inclusion of bicycle initiatives in their approach to transportation. The Legacy Trail is the first regional trail project in East Texas and it will greatly improve the mobility for non-motorized traffic in Tyler and allow connectivity with surrounding communities in the future.”

Winding through the city, Legacy Trail is a key component of Tyler’s Regional Trail Plan which identifies a network of sidewalk and trail connections. It will connect several regional parks, schools, business complexes and large residential subdivisions, some 30 miles of existing bicycle lanes and about 27 miles of existing trails. 

TYLER



The city of Tyler received a \$3.5 million grant from TxDOT to build or expand almost four miles of a multi-use trail. The trail is a key component of the city’s plan for a regional trail system.

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE



**Texas voters
approve additional
funding plan for
highway fund**

2015 may go down in the history books as a banner year for transportation, particularly for Texas. On the federal front, this past December, Congress passed a multi-year transportation bill. The five-year bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST), is the first long-term reauthorization bill in a decade. The FAST Act will make \$305 billion available to states for their highway and transit programs.

In November, Texas voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 7. The constitutional amendment, sanctioned by 83 percent of the electorate, dedicates a portion of the state's sales and vehicle sales and rental tax revenue to the State Highway Fund.

For any of that money to make it into the fund, a couple of conditions must be met. Under the amendment's provisions, after the state collects \$28 billion in general sales tax revenue, \$2.5 billion of the remaining revenues will go to the highway fund. Those transfers will begin in fiscal year 2018. Also, after the first \$5 billion of vehicle sales and rental taxes are collected, 35 percent of the collections above that amount will be transferred to transportation. In dollars and cents, the changes could translate into an average of \$2.7 billion over the next four fiscal years for transportation.

The funding can be used only to construct, maintain and acquire right of way for roads on the state highway system. It may also be used to pay debt service on existing general obligation bonds issued by TxDOT.

While the department does not yet have a list of projects slated to receive the funding, there's no shortage of potential candidates. Gov. Greg Abbott has called on the Texas Transportation Commission and the department to make relieving congestion in metropolitan and urban areas a priority.

And with good reason. According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Texas drivers in our metropolitan areas are spending \$12.5 billion every year in lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion. That's about \$1,200 for the average commuter in the state's large- and medium-sized metro areas.

But addressing congestion will not be the only goal. TxDOT staff will be working with metropolitan planning organizations, local leaders and communities to determine their transportation needs and priorities for the funding, including ways to connect Texas

communities, improve maintenance on roadways and address energy sector roadways.

"Local input is crucial to making sure that this funding is used the way Texans expect," said Interim Deputy Executive Director Marc Williams. "Projects are born from the local level up. Projects can't benefit the state if they don't first benefit our communities and regions."

While the extra funding will be a financial game changer for the agency, this is the second time in recent years that voters have anted up for transportation.

Proposition 1, which was overwhelmingly passed by Texas voters in 2014, directed a portion of the state's rainy day fund money to the State Highway Fund. That move translated into an initial \$1.74 billion for the state's roads and bridges.


"With the passage of Propositions 1 and 7, state leaders have helped us address our funding needs. Because of the work by Gov. Abbott and our legislators, a broad-based, dedicated source of funding has been established that will help us build and maintain the state's transportation system for years to come."

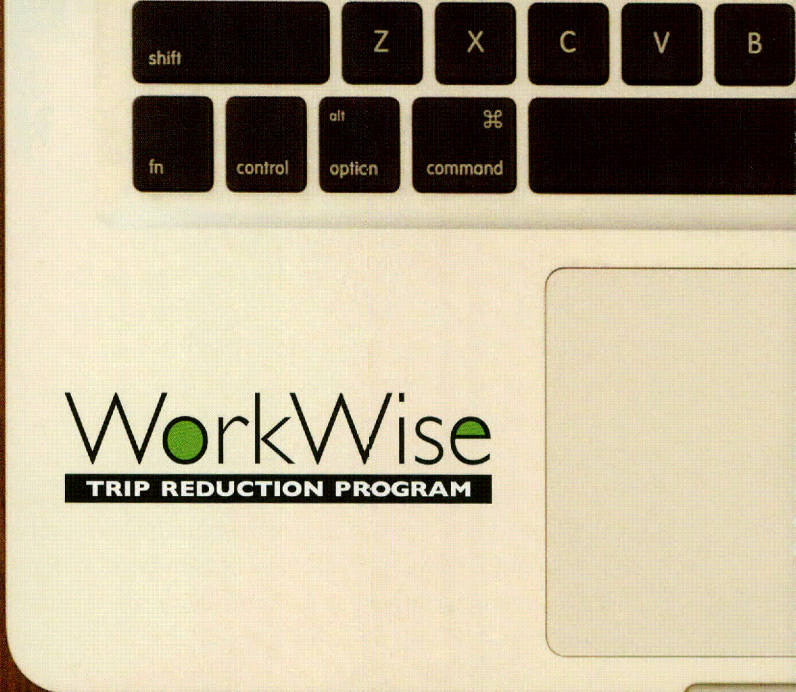
COMMISSION CHAIRMAN TRYON LEWIS

About 200 projects were eventually awarded using this funding, and by the time construction is completed, more than 800 miles of highway lanes will have been rehabilitated, nearly 500 miles of new highway lanes constructed, more than 100 bridges replaced, widened or rehabilitated and another 150 miles of passing lanes built

on rural highways. For the fiscal 2016-2017 biennium, another \$1.7 billion in Proposition 1 is expected to be deposited to the State Highway Fund.

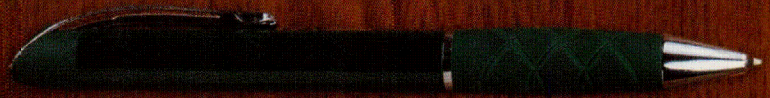
The extra revenue could not have come at a more crucial time. Texas and other states are facing serious challenges as it relates to transportation finance. Federal funding for transportation has become increasingly unreliable as evidenced by the recent passage of the first longer-term reauthorization bill in years. Vehicles are more fuel efficient, meaning that drivers are making fewer trips to the pumps and putting less money into highway treasuries. And with the inflated costs of highway construction materials, existing funding does not go as far as it used to.

"With the passage of Propositions 1 and 7, state leaders have helped us address our funding needs. Because of the work by Gov. Abbott and our legislators, a broad-based, dedicated source of funding has been established that will help us build and maintain the state's transportation system for years to come," said Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Tryon Lewis. "And that's going to pay off in better, safer and less congested roads for drivers." 

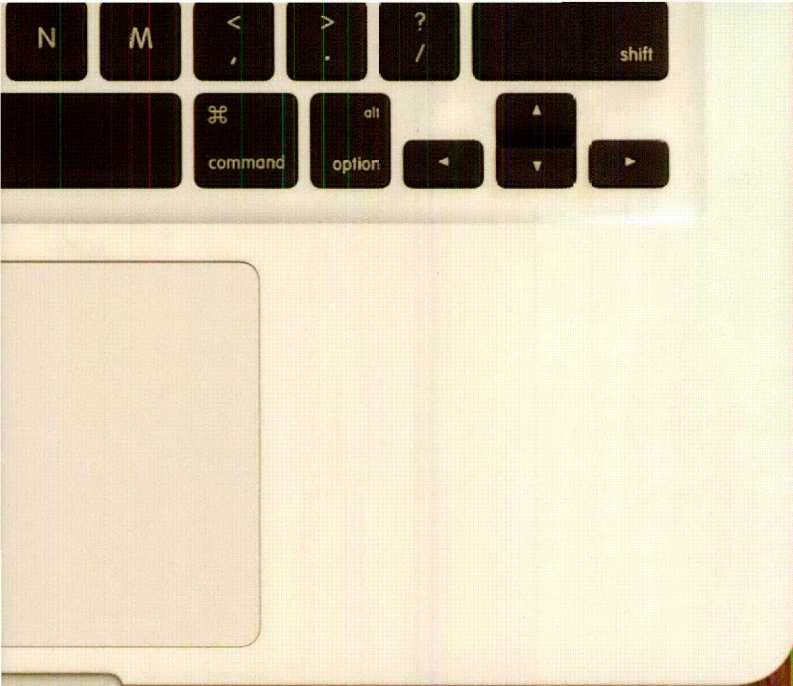


WorkWise
TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM

LEADING BY EXAMPLE IN WORK TRIP REDUCTION



If state agencies could make New Year's resolutions, here are three for TxDOT in 2016: reduce traffic congestion, improve employee productivity and conserve the environment — all through one new program. That's a pretty lofty aspiration, but it's exactly what TxDOT's leadership has in mind with the launch of WorkWise, a new peak-time trip reduction program.



Beginning in January, eligible employees in the Austin area will reduce their number of commute trips using a suite of work and travel options, including telework, compressed work weeks and flexible schedules, as well as transit use, carpool/vanpool use and walking or biking to work. A statewide expansion of the program is planned for later in the year.

WorkWise grew out of a pilot telework program that TxDOT started just over a year ago. That pilot was a solid success, demonstrating that we can, in fact, address congestion by taking TxDOT employee cars off the road — without compromising service. Worker productivity, some supervisors say, actually took a step up.

“I think productivity has increased,” says Paul Campbell, director of the Payments Management Section in the Finance Division. “We see that in our reports, but people are calling in sick less and morale has improved. Overall, people are more willing to put in the extra effort because we are giving them something back.”

For supervisors who are new

to the idea, a little skepticism is understandable. How do you provide adequate supervision and measure productivity in employees you can't see?

“Part of the management philosophy I developed long ago was an understanding that just because someone is in their cubicle or office is not necessarily a measure of their productivity,” says Jim Hollis, a traffic safety section manager in the Traffic Operations Division.


At its core, WorkWise is about getting cars off the road. It's about this agency embracing its mission to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas, and doing so in creative ways that augment traditional road building. It's also about change, something that's necessary to appeal to a new generation of employees. The options made available through WorkWise are increasingly essential to attracting and retaining talented workers.

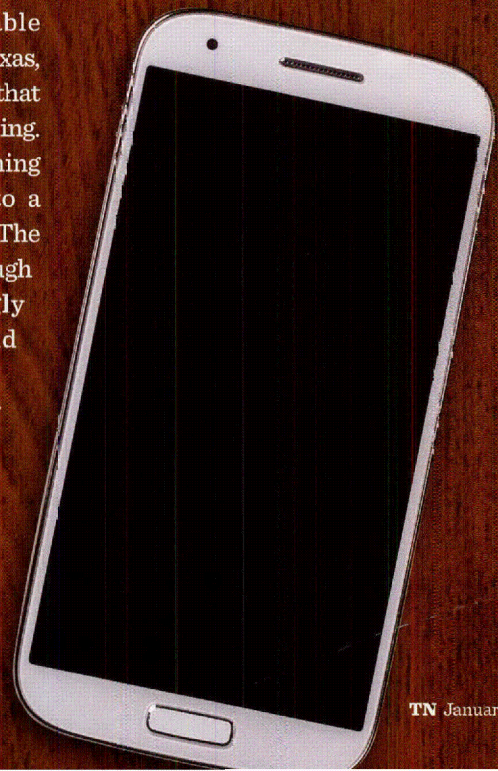
“It's a benefit the younger workforce is looking for,” says Tammy Calderon, a section director in the Human Resources Division. “By 2020 nearly half of the workforce will be

millennials. We want to be that workplace of choice.”

WorkWise is also about being a leader. TxDOT is in an ideal position to lead by example. In fact, the agency has an obligation to do so.

“When you look at the government workforce as a whole, then one small start here could lead to a massive movement of removing people from the roadway and reducing congestion,” says Lauren Garduño, chief of Procurement and Field Support Operations.

“That's doing our part. I think we are obligated to try to do our part since it's within our control.” 



CAN YOU DIG IT?

All transportation projects must go through environmental studies prior to construction. The team for the U.S. 175 expansion project discovered thousands of artifacts from a village of the Caddo people this past summer. Here, (left to right) Environmental Specialist Christine Crosby, Environmental Coordinator Jay Tullos, and Archeologist Waldo Troell examine part of the excavated site.

TxDOT staff working on the U.S. 175 expansion project in the Tyler District discovered centuries-old remains of a village of the Caddo people this past summer. The Archeological Studies Branch in the Environmental Affairs Division reviews discoveries such as these and determines their impact on the state's history, heritage and the cultural environment.

The studies team discovered thousands of ancient artifacts including pieces of ceramic pots, arrowheads and stone tools. The artifacts date back to the 1400s-1650s and are believed to be part of a small village of the Caddo people who lived in and around northeast Texas before Europeans settled there.

Discoveries like this are not uncommon in the area, which has a rich cultural and archeological history. In the last 50 years, multiple prehistoric and historic Caddo sites have been found during environmental studies for

transportation projects.


"Each time TxDOT archeologists go into the field, we have to consider the places on the landscape that people liked to settle, what traces their activities might have left and how the landscape and those traces have been changed by modern conditions. Knowing such things allows us to focus our search," said Scott Pletka, lead archeologist.

The site was originally discovered in 1935 by University of Texas archeologists, but no records or maps of the site could be found until TxDOT archeologist Waldo Troell started digging in the archives. Its re-discovery means that TxDOT can excavate, study and then permanently store the artifacts at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory.

"These discoveries reveal a remarkable part of history for this people and Texas. It is a story that continues to unfold and that we will share," said Pletka.

TREK INTO TEXAS HISTORY FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In 2007, TxDOT archeologists discovered the ruins of the Ransom Williams Farmstead, a small hardscrabble farm that was home to an African-American family from 1871 to 1905, during the tumultuous years of Reconstruction and the Jim Crow eras.

During Black History Month this February, learn more about this and other TxDOT archeology projects at texasbeyondhistory.net. 

LEWIS NAMED ONE OF THE TOP 30 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN OF HOUSTON


Raquelle Lewis, public information officer supervisor for the Houston District, was honored by d-mars.com Business Journal as one of the Top 30 Influential Women of Houston in August. This honor puts Lewis in the company of some of the elite women of the city.

According to the publication, “tenacity, discipline and diligence are just a few of the criteria for making the list. This year’s honorees have broken barriers in their respective fields and left an indelible mark on the face of Houston.”

As the principal spokesperson for the Houston District, Lewis oversees development and dissemination of information to help Texans understand and use department services. She supervises a staff of four, including three public information officers. She also provides information to the media regarding highway conditions for daily

commutes and during emergencies.

Lewis was appointed to serve as a special advisor to TxDOT’s executive administration during the 84th Legislative Session. In this capacity, she worked closely with the department’s administration to facilitate meetings and activities pertaining to the legislative priorities of the Texas Transportation Commission and to communicate to legislative members about department activities and responsibilities.

“It is an incredible honor to be recognized by an organization that highlights some of the city’s most successful and influential women,” Lewis said. “To be included as one of the Top 30 Influential Women of Houston shows the great appreciation many have for transportation issues and the amount of hard work that goes into communicating the intricacies of the state transportation system.” 




Raquelle Lewis, public information officer supervisor for the Houston District, was honored by d-mars.com Business Journal as one of the Top 30 Influential Women of Houston in August.

TxDOT photo

COMMUNICATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

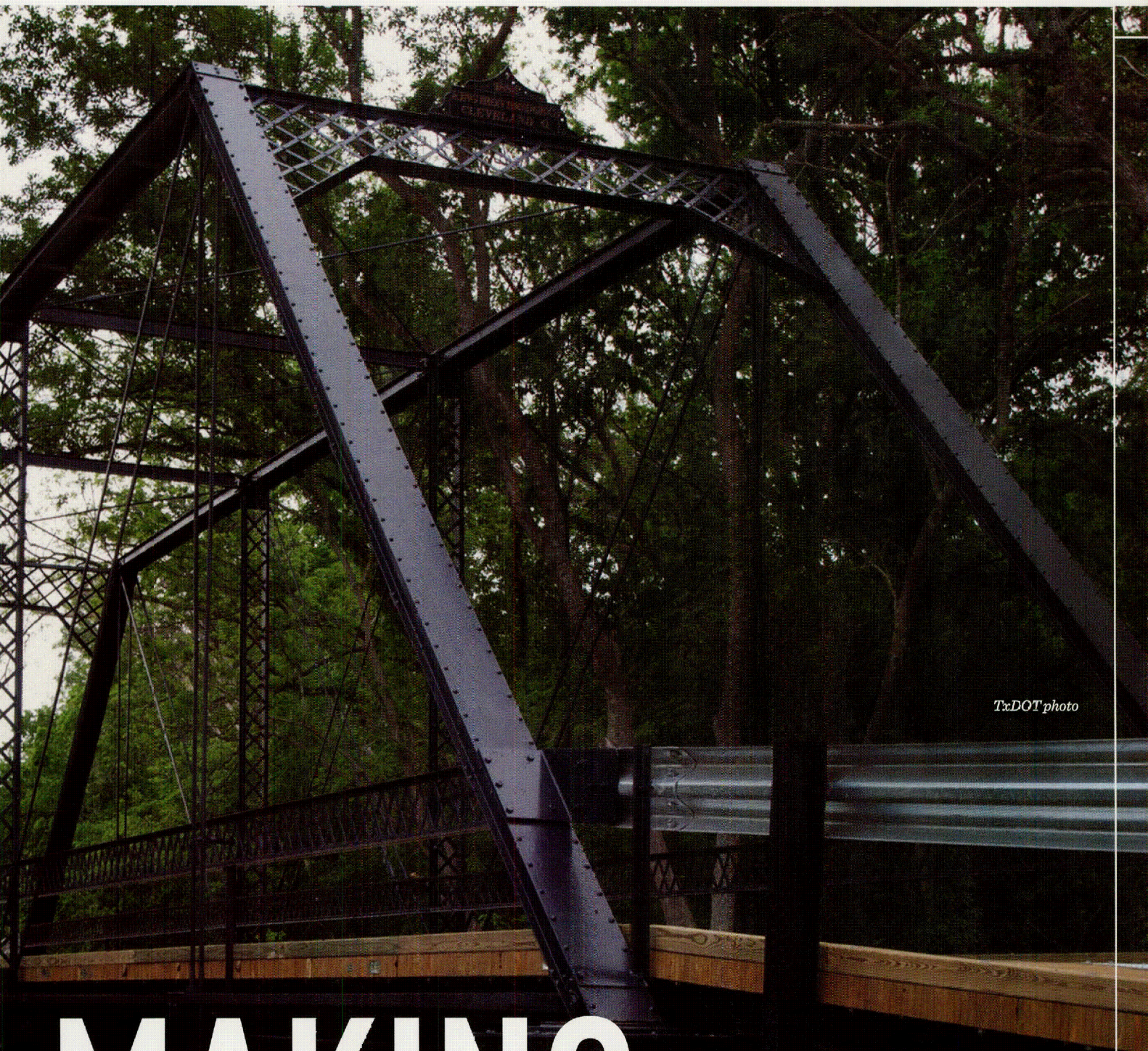
The Communications and Travel Information divisions and the Office of Public Involvement held a Communications Symposium in early August that allowed staff members from across the state to collaborate and share best practices.

Former Executive Director Joe Weber spoke to attendees and former Deputy Executive Director John Barton gave one of his last talks before his retirement.

The Symposium also provided an opportunity for this great group shot of some of the Public Information Officers for the TxDOT districts. *From left to right: (sitting on floor) Kathi White and Kelli Reyna; (seated row) Jodi Wheatley, Rhonda Oaks, Raquelle Lewis, Mary Belle Turner, Deidrea George, Sarah Dupre, Karen Threlkeld, Laura Lopez, Dianah Ascencio, Michelle Releford, and Blanca De Vaile; (standing row) Adele Lewis, Paul Braun, Donna Huerta, Ken Roberts, Natalie Galindo, Marcus Sandifer, Lisa Walzl, Chris Bishop, Val Lopez, Tony Hartzel, Andrew Carlson, Ryan LaFontaine, Michael Peters, Jess Blackburn, Rickey Dailey, Octavio Saenz, Josh Donat, Barbara Seal, Jennifer Wright, Jodi Hodges, Bobby Colwell, Raul Leal, Gene Powell and Darny Perez.* 



TxDOT photo



TxDOT photo

MAKING CONNECTIONS

TxDOT and Fayette County recently partnered to rehabilitate the 1885 Pratt truss Piano Bridge for continued vehicular use. Pratt trusses have flat top chords and inclined end posts and are usually 30 to 150 feet long.

COMMUNITIES WEIGH IN ON PRESERVING HISTORIC TRUSS BRIDGES

Historic bridges physically connect communities and they figuratively connect us with our past. A bridge is often the setting as well as a character in our stories. Although Texas has many bridges, the oldest are metal truss bridges.

The number of metal truss bridges in Texas is dwindling as communities grow and public funding is spread thin. The Cultural Resources Management Branch in the Environmental Affairs Division is reviewing how to manage these treasured structures in the event they are unable to remain in place. TxDOT is encouraging public input to develop recommendations for these bridges. It is also informing communities about options for maintaining and preserving them.

Many of the state's small communities built truss bridges before World War II and can no longer maintain them. Though the majority of historic truss bridges are owned by counties and cities, TxDOT plays a significant role in shaping the future of these bridges in accordance with its mission to deliver a safe transportation system.


"Our intent was to bring to light some of the challenges these bridges face and provide possible solutions," said Rebekah Dobrasko, historic preservation specialist. "To that end, the Environmental Affairs and Bridge divisions developed toolkits with best practices and recommended guidance for counties to maintain and repair their truss bridges. We also began a conversation with the public. We wanted to ensure that people knew about the toolkits and had the opportunity to give us feedback about local truss bridges. As part of that conversation, we wanted to honor the history and the stories that surround these bridges."

In partnership with the Texas Historical Commission and the Historic Bridge Foundation, TxDOT hosted open houses in Bastrop, Abilene, Waco and Victoria this past summer to gather input on historic truss bridges. With the support of the Office of Public Involvement, the team used innovative strategies — such as online surveys, a virtual open house and hands-on feedback — to reach Texans in all areas of the state.

"One of the highlights this past summer was the Share Your Story feature," said Julie Jerome, public involvement specialist. Those attending the open houses brought photos and stories about bridges in their communities.

"We learned about these bridges and how valuable they are to these communities," said Jerome. "It is personal. The two-way conversation between TxDOT and the community is the cornerstone of public involvement."

The Communications Division, through the creative services section and district public information officers, also supported the campaign with dynamic webpages, appealing display boards and printed versions of the metal truss toolkits. Other outreach tactics involved social media, news releases and targeted mailings. Media attention included a front-page article in the Abilene Reporter-News, a news feature on Texas Public Radio and a number of printed and video feature stories bringing awareness to local communities about the historic bridges effort.

"This is about the past, sure, but it's about the past informing the future," said Bruce Jensen, Cultural Resources Management section director. "The input we received at these open houses serves as a fundamental piece to develop a management plan to guide decisions on these bridges for future generations." 

TRUSS BRIDGES BY THE NUMBERS

147

Truss bridges still in vehicular service

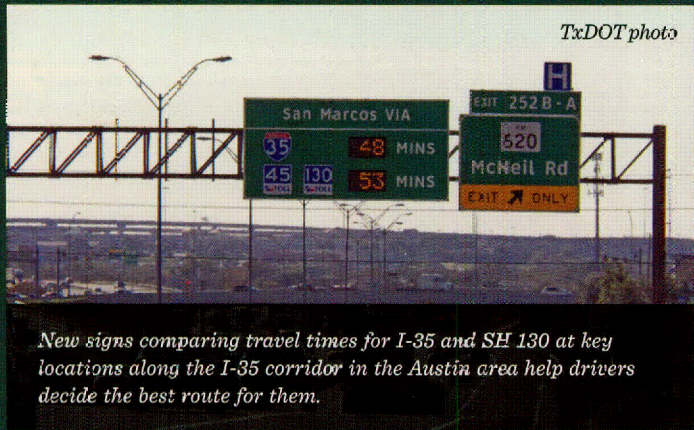
109

Truss bridges off-system

1880s

Dates of oldest truss bridges still in service

REAL-TIME TO DECIDE



New signs comparing travel times for I-35 and SH 130 at key locations along the I-35 corridor in the Austin area help drivers decide the best route for them.


Making the decision to travel on I-35 or SH 130 is now easier for Central Texas motorists. The Austin District has completed the installation of three travel time signs at key diversion route locations along the I-35 corridor. Travel times began displaying on Oct. 27, 2015.

The new signs provide comparison travel times for I-35 and SH 130. The signs are placed along northbound I-35 in Buda, southbound I-35 in Georgetown, and southbound I-35 in Round Rock. They allow motorists to make an informed decision on routes.

“Drivers now have the ability to make a route decision based on real-time travel data,” said former Austin District Engineer Greg Malatek.

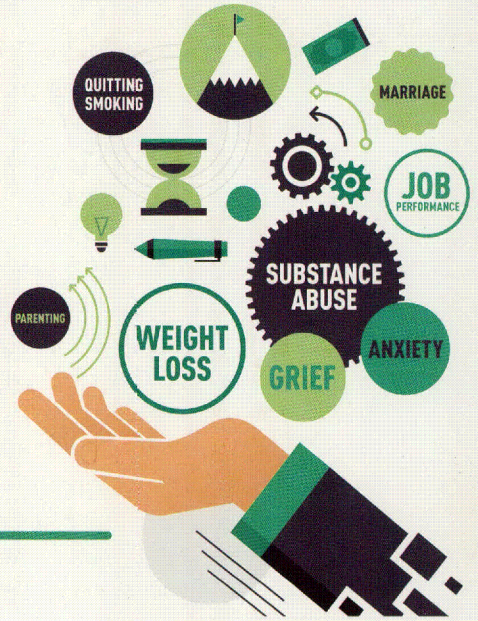
“With I-35 in central Texas being one of the most congested highways in Texas, we have to keep looking for ways to manage traffic throughout this corridor. The incorporation of these travel time signs where we’re using technology to move people and goods more efficiently is a step in the right direction.”

The signs share real-time data with users to promote better travel decisions including routes, travel modes and timing of trips, which increases reliability of the overall network. Bluetooth detectors located along the routes will transmit travel time data to the signs using wireless technology, which then displays the approximate time it would take to travel from point A to point B on each roadway. This information is supported by TxDOT’s Lonestar software, which receives all of the necessary data from roadway sensors on I-35 and SH 130.

The travel time comparison signs were funded through a \$250,000 Federal Highway Administration grant. Installation work was performed through the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, in cooperation with Highway Intelligent Traffic Solutions, N-Line Traffic Maintenance and Skyline Technologies. 

AVOID LIFE’S POTHOLE

with the
Employee Assistance Program




Employees who need a little extra help can turn to the Employee Assistance Program to get back on track. The service, offered through Alliance Work Partners, is free. In addition to up to six sessions of short term counseling, EAP can offer support to you and your household members in many other ways. They can assist you with issues including:

- Job performance
- Substance abuse
- Weight loss
- Marital difficulties
- Parenting
- Time management
- Managing depression and anxiety
- Grief and bereavement
- Quitting smoking

Frequently the hardest part of a decision is doing the research. A confidential conversation with a counselor who can do the research for you could get you closer to a plan. Counselors can help you with childcare, elder care, career resources, college planning, household repairs, support groups and veterans’ services.

Money management is another area where EAP can assist. Financial struggles take a toll on your health and go beyond not having enough money at the end of the month. EAP provides telephone and web-based resources for you and your family. A network of legal and financial professionals can help on a variety of financial topics including budgeting, debt counseling, managing investments and tax liens.

If someone you know is having a rough time, EAP services are available to retirees, married/divorced partners and significant others. All covered employees may bring anyone with them to their authorized sessions regardless of their relationship to the employee. Anyone who contacts EAP will receive information and a referral. For more information, visit the Human Resources Division page on Crossroads. To contact EAP, call 866-348-9368. 

Warm Hearts and Warm Blankets

AVIATION STAFF EMBRACES THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT



TxDOT photo

Aviation Division employees organized a blanket drive to make 50 no-sew blankets for the Blanket Hearts charity. From left: (front row) Sheri Quinlan, Laura Gonzales, Becky Vick, Rose Pankhurst, Megan McLellan, Julie Fielder; (middle row) Robert Johnson, Amy Slaughter, Trudy Hill, Megan Caffall, Allison Martin, Beverly Longfellow; (back row) Harry Lorton, Paul Slusser, Bill Gunn, Robert Jackson, Kari Campbell, and Division Director Dave Fulton.

Each year during the holidays, Aviation Division employees select a special cause to help a child, a family or a charity. This past Christmas, staff organized a blanket drive to buy and make 50 no-sew blankets that they donated to the Blanket Hearts charity. According to its website, Blanket Hearts is a charitable ministry that provides blankets to needy people. The group's goal was to distribute 1,500 of the coverings at the national Snowball Express Snowflake event for the families of military fallen heroes. The event was held in Dallas this past December.

Each lunch hour from September to November, Aviation employees sat at a table in their lunch room to cut, tie, roll and tag the no-sew blankets. Patriotic print and red, white and blue solid fleece was ordered to make the handmade gifts. Some Aviation employees took pre-cut blanket material to their spouses and mothers who wanted to make a blanket for the cause.

The division's charity project was the brainchild of Beverly Longfellow and Sheri Quinlan, both contract specialists for the division.

"I'm an Air Force veteran so I know how much families sacrifice when a loved one is in the military. This is just one way I can give back to the service members who give so much for all of us," Longfellow said.

This is not the first community service project for the division. Aviation staff has provided furniture, household goods, food and Christmas gifts to a family who lost everything in a flood in Austin. They've also given a truckload of wrapped toys and stuffed stockings to two children who had been taken from their family homes. One little boy who had a grave illness received boxes of video games, movies, books and toys to make his recovery less painful.

Thanks to the Aviation Division for paying it forward and making a difference in their community. 



TxDOT photo

Aviation staff worked during their lunch hours for three months to complete 50 blankets. From left: Kelle Chancey, Bijan Jamalabadi, Rose Pankhurst, Ryan Hindman, Laura Gonzales, Paul Slusser and Sheri Quinlan.



TxDOT photo

An example of a finished no-sew blanket.

NEW INITIATIVES MOVE FLEET TOWARD EXCELLENCE

The Fleet Operations Division (FOD) has rolled out new programs to continue improving the way TxDOT buys, maintains and uses equipment.

FLEET EXCELLENCE

The division is building on improvements gained from its Fleet Excellence program, an initiative first introduced in 2014 to streamline shop operations. Nicknamed FLEX, the

The preventive maintenance program is the key to keeping your vehicles and equipment on the road.

program focused on increasing shop performance, improving the parts ordering process and developing work planning tools. The program helped reduce equipment down-time by completing repairs faster and saving money on outsourced work.

In the fall, Fleet Operations piloted FLEX II, a four-week program that focuses on each district's preventive maintenance program. The FLEX team includes Fleet

Deputy Director Kevin Fareri, interim Fleet QA Manager Mark McWhorter and SWOT Specialist Bruce Melde. They work one-on-one with each district shop's preventive maintenance coordinator to fine-tune preventative maintenance activities.

Together, they set up preventive maintenance calendars, responsibilities and checklists, and help the coordinator establish good communication between the shop and maintenance sections. They also provide preventive maintenance training for maintenance sections. The Pharr and Paris districts served as the FLEX II pilots. The initiative will roll out statewide this year.

"With any fleet, the preventive maintenance program is the key to keeping your vehicles and equipment on the road," said Fareri. "It's the most important thing we can do. When

you do preventive maintenance, your equipment will last longer. It cuts your costs and your down-time."

FLEX III is also in the works. This phase of Fleet Operations Excellence brings hands-on pre-trip inspection training to each district. The training demonstrates procedures on different types of equipment. Trainers tailor the schedule and format to each district's needs.

SPECIFICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Fleet Operations launched a cross-division Specification Review Committee several months ago. The division's Acquisitions Section is leading the effort, and the team includes representatives from the Procurement and Occupational Safety divisions.



FLEX team members Bruce Melde (left) and Kevin Fareri demonstrate a preventive maintenance inspection during Fleet Excellence training.

TxDOT photo




TxDOT photo

The committee develops standard operating procedures for equipment specifications, identifies user needs, conducts industry research, gathers vendor feedback and oversees all specification revisions.

The team has developed a form for employees to submit their ideas for consideration.

The committee encourages employees to submit ideas for equipment specifications because those who operate the equipment are in the best position to suggest improvements. The team has developed a form for employees to submit their ideas for consideration. The form is available on Fleet's

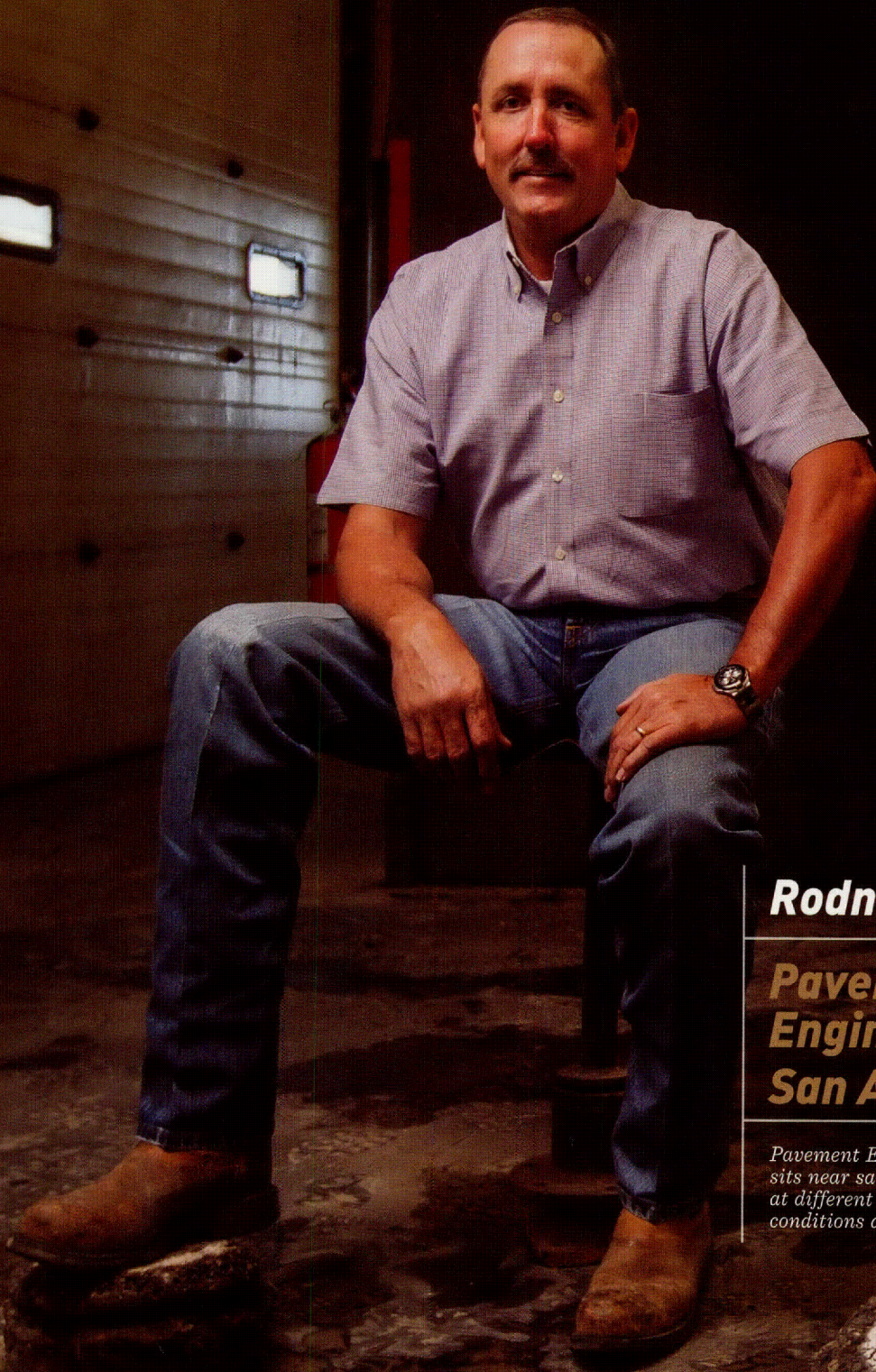
SharePoint site.

Improving the specification process helps Fleet Operations purchase equipment with many of the safety features and customizations required for TxDOT's work. This reduces the amount of time and money needed to make the vehicles ready for service. 

The Specifications Review Committee collects ideas from the field to improve TxDOT's equipment, such as this new aerial device, or lift unit, that operators helped customize by providing input on the specifications.

I am a...

Pavement Engineering Specialist



Rodney Tucker

**Pavement
Engineering Specialist
San Angelo District**

Pavement Engineering Specialist Rodney Tucker sits near samples of pavement taken from roadways at different depths, which he analyzes to assess conditions and identify potential problems.

Rodney Tucker was born into the TxDOT family. His father worked as a construction inspector in the Fort Stockton area office for 36 years before retiring. Tucker worked for the Fort Stockton Maintenance Section while attending college.

In 1993, he moved to Dallas and began work as a construction inspector, just like his father. He then moved to the Big Spring Area Office before taking a position at the San Angelo Area Office. With his marriage in 1995, Tucker decided to make his career at TxDOT.

Tucker and his wife, Staci, have a young son, Blair. They are involved with the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo Association and the San Angelo Rodeo.

Tell us what a pavement engineering specialist does and what kind of projects you work on?

I wear a few different hats. I work closely with the Materials and Pavements Section of the Construction Division in Austin to collect, analyze and report the condition of the pavement within our district. This includes profiling the district roadways every fall and skid testing them every summer. I collect data to analyze problem areas and design pavement. I work with district construction and maintenance personnel to identify potential problem areas and develop possible solutions. As Texas Reference Marker and soon to be Geospatial Roadway Inventory Database coordinator, I maintain the district's roadway data. Also, I am responsible for collecting and verifying data reported to the Federal Highway Administration.

Share an instance where your work made a significant impact on the traveling public?

I have the training and experience to identify potential pavement problems. The week before Christmas a few years ago, I noticed a section of pavement on I-10 that was beginning to show signs of failure. Our maintenance section repaired part of it and closed a lane until further repairs could be made after the holidays. It made the holidays safer for a lot of travelers.

What is the most rewarding part about being a pavement engineering specialist?


I get to work with so many different people — people from design, construction and maintenance in my district and others. Our common goal is to have our roads in the best possible condition. Problem solving together to reach that goal is rewarding. Since I started my career as a construction inspector, I am now analyzing the very roads that I inspected during their construction. Understanding the materials, construction practices and conditions that went into the construction years ago is extremely valuable when analyzing why certain things are performing well and others — not so much. That is truly rewarding.

What do you like most about working in the San Angelo District?

We have an unusual district due to our size. It is spread out over a large portion of the state. We have cotton farms, desert plains, beautiful oak forests and steep mountains. We have vacation hotspots crawling with people and desolate dead-end roads. I get to see every inch of it and am always amazed at the different landscapes and the unique people within our district. I always wish others could share what I see every day.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your job and how do you handle them?

Due to my various job responsibilities, preparation and time management are essential. Making everything fit is challenging sometimes. Luckily, I have great supervisors who allow me the space to make everything fit together. We have limited equipment for pavement management, so coordination with other districts all over the state is crucial. Fortunately, the division and district coordinators are good people to work with when sharing equipment. We are like a family.

Another challenge is seeing our pavements aging and traffic increasing. In our energy sector, I may identify a road showing early signs of distress and two days later, it has completely failed. Our maintenance sections never had a chance to repair it. These are challenges we all face, but working together to overcome them feels much more rewarding. 

HAPPY HIGHWAYS: TEXAS HIGHWAYS BRINGS HOME 17 AWARDS

Texas Highways magazine won big in San Diego in October at the annual International Regional Magazine Association conference, receiving 17 awards. Each year, magazines from across the United States and Canada compete in 28 categories.

Texas Highways staff took top honors in column writing, single photo and art direction of a single story. The “Meet Your Texas Makers” article in the November 2014 issue won gold and was praised by judges for its smart design, strong photos, organization and readability. Mark Mahorsky, creative director for Texas Highways magazine, developed the concept for the article.

“We wanted to have something that would highlight the mantra True Texas, which is what the overriding theme has been for the magazine,” said Mahorsky. “We wanted to find some Texas-based products that would garner some interest. Every product has a story and we wanted to tell that story. It was a lot of fun creating it.” TxDOT photographer Will Van Overbeek shot the portraits that accompanied the article.

In addition to the article, Mahorsky received a silver award for overall art direction of a magazine with a circulation of 30,000 or more.

Texas Highways Associate Editor Matt Joyce won bronze in the writer of the year category.

“I look for stories that give me the chance to explore interesting aspects of Texas culture

that are relatively obscure, from overlooked small towns to interesting craftspeople, quirky attractions and colorful chapters of our state’s history,” he said.


“My favorite of the IRMA submissions was ‘Texas Grit,’ a story about the history of the Dust Bowl in the Texas Panhandle and the various places around the region where contemporary travelers can learn more about the Dust Bowl era. I covered a lot of ground in the Panhandle while researching the story, discovered lots of gorgeous territory that I’d never seen before and met many interesting and generous people,” Joyce said.

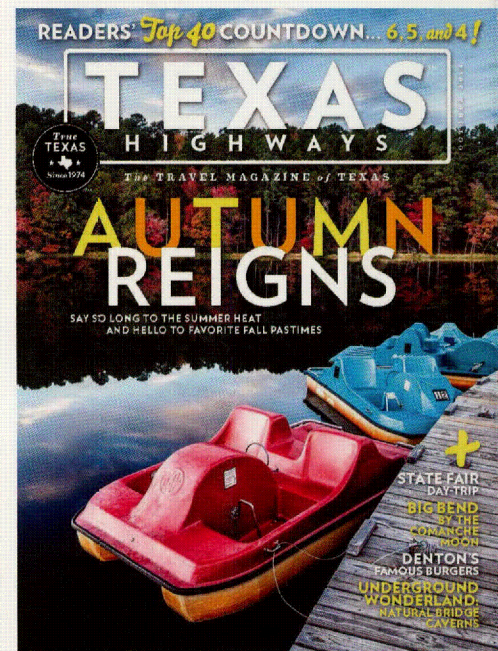
Mahorsky says what makes the recognition special is the level of competition they are up against.

“That’s definitely a feather in our cap,” Mahorsky said.

He credits the recent success of the magazine to a design that has evolved with what readers want. Not only has the magazine received praise from its peer group, it has also been noticed by longtime readers. Mahorsky points to one comment in particular that summed it up.

“In days gone by, I flipped through Texas Highways as a country gal’s overview, but today your wonderful magazine has climbed the ladder to become a serious ‘must read,’” said Doris Richeson of Possum Kingdom Lake.

In all, Texas Highways earned three gold, seven silver, five bronze and two awards of merit. Congratulations to everyone! 



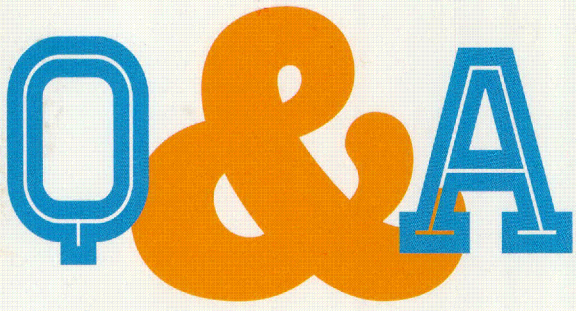
Texas Highways magazine received 17 awards at the annual International Regional Magazine Association conference.

Travel Matters
THE LIGHTER SIDE OF TRAVELING

Pop Out and About
FOSSIL RIM'S RESTORATIVE CALL OF THE WILD
text by Barbara Rodriguez illustration by Michael Witts

AFTER HE TURNED SO, IT WAS difficult to get my 1990 to leave the house. I found it hard to coax this gas guzzler to the road, who had been my travel partner. But, Pop, you do what you have to do by default. I tried to awaken his spirit of discovery, and allow my young son to see his granddaddy on the road. I tried to tell him, "That's what I discovered! Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, outside Quanah, is filled with animals both native and imported. A driving tour allows you to see these animals in their natural habitat, but on this particular day, the animals are housed in the pens and are not out on the range. The animals are housed in the pens and are not out on the range." I tried to tell him, "That's what I discovered! Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, outside Quanah, is filled with animals both native and imported. A driving tour allows you to see these animals in their natural habitat, but on this particular day, the animals are housed in the pens and are not out on the range." I tried to tell him, "That's what I discovered! Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, outside Quanah, is filled with animals both native and imported. A driving tour allows you to see these animals in their natural habitat, but on this particular day, the animals are housed in the pens and are not out on the range."

The Travel Matters column by Barbara Rodriguez took home gold at the International Regional Magazine Association conference.



Hector Siller

Hector Siller

Transportation Engineer • San Antonio District

Hector Siller has been with TxDOT for three years since graduating from the University of Texas at San Antonio. He worked as a summer hire in the San Antonio District Survey Department in 2010 and 2011. The following summer of 2012 he worked at the San Benito Area Office in the Pharr District. Upon graduation Hector was hired at the San Antonio District to work at The Bexar Metro Area Office where he spent two years learning many different aspects of construction. In January 2015 he moved to the district's Central Design Division and has quickly become a key contributor to multiple design projects. Hector is currently working on obtaining his professional engineer's license.

Eggs — breakfast or dinner? Scrambled, boiled, fried or over-easy?

Weirdly, on multiple occasions I have eaten eggs for breakfast, lunch and dinner: over easy for breakfast, hard-boiled for lunch and scrambled for dinner. But back to the original question: breakfast, scrambled!

Best commercial of all time?

I've loved a lot of the Doritos commercials. By far the funniest one was "The Best Part." Look it up on YouTube and have a laugh.

Why is your district the best in TxDOT?

Our leaders empower employees to step up and be leaders, not only in the workplace, but also in the community. As a part of the young engineers group, I participate in many community events, such as judging at science fairs and speaking at our local university. Our leaders really want us to succeed; they give us the opportunity to shadow them and be part of important activities and decisions.

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

Ground coffee! How did we exist without it?

On your day off, what do you look forward to the most?

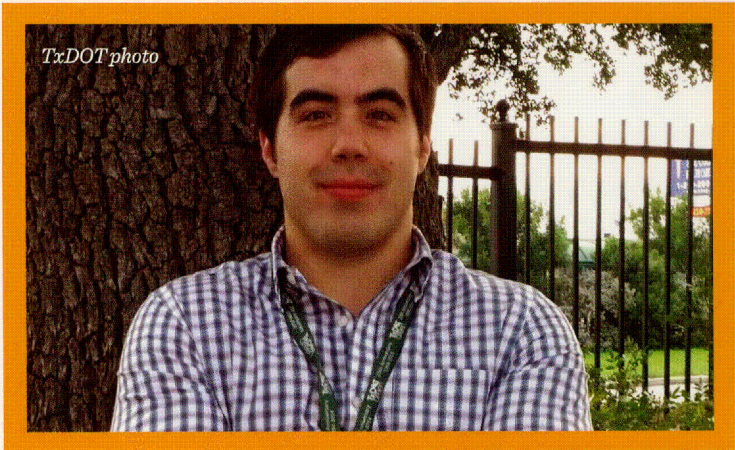
Working out! I'm a fitness enthusiast. I also like cooking.

How do you ensure that safety is your top priority every day?

Personally, I recently committed to placing my cellphone in the vehicle's glove compartment each time I drive. This new habit allows me to keep my focus on my driving. Professionally, our district adopted the backing policy for state vehicles.

What are your greatest leadership accomplishments while at TxDOT?

I currently serve as president of the young engineers group for the San Antonio District and as the State Employee Charitable Campaign coordinator for the district. This year, the district raised more money than in the past five years. I am proud of this accomplishment because it shows the giving nature of our employees and the hard work for this cause.



TxDOT photo

What's an interesting fact about you that most people don't know?

Because I'm an engineer, people think I have always been great at math. I had terrible math skills in my early school years. My grandmother would sign my tests. When my parents found out how much I struggled, they pushed me to work harder and helped me improve.

If you could have personally witnessed some event in history, what would it have been?

I would like to have witnessed the building of the Egyptian pyramids. It amazes me that people in ancient times built these great marvels of the world with only primitive technology.

If you could wake up tomorrow in the body of someone else, who would it be and what would you do?

Barack Obama, the president of the United States. He has been so inspirational, rising from nothing to becoming the leader of the free world. If I woke up as President Obama, one of my many objectives would be to continue providing humanitarian aid to the underserved and strive to build a better America.

If you had to be named after a city, state, or country, what would your name be?

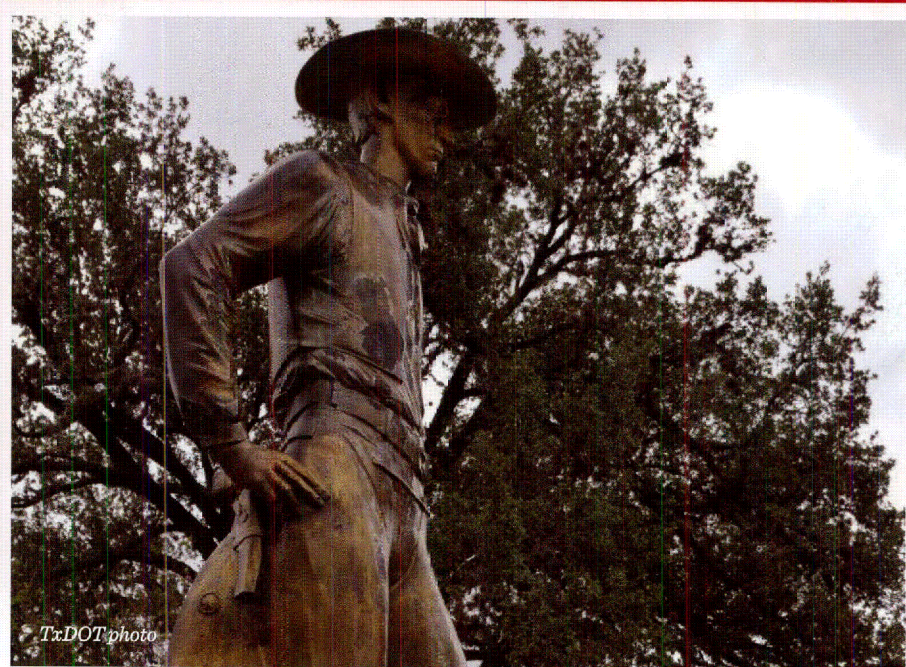
Believe it or not, I'm already named after a city. There are towns in both Minnesota and in New York called Hector. They were named after Hector, the great Trojan prince.

Mountains or the beach? View or TV?

Without a doubt, the beach! I grew up near South Padre Island, one of the best beaches in Texas. I went to Hawaii for my honeymoon and it only solidified my love of the ocean. Definitely view over TV.

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 or know where it was taken, send an email to TNideas@txdot.gov. Deadline for submissions is Jan. 29.

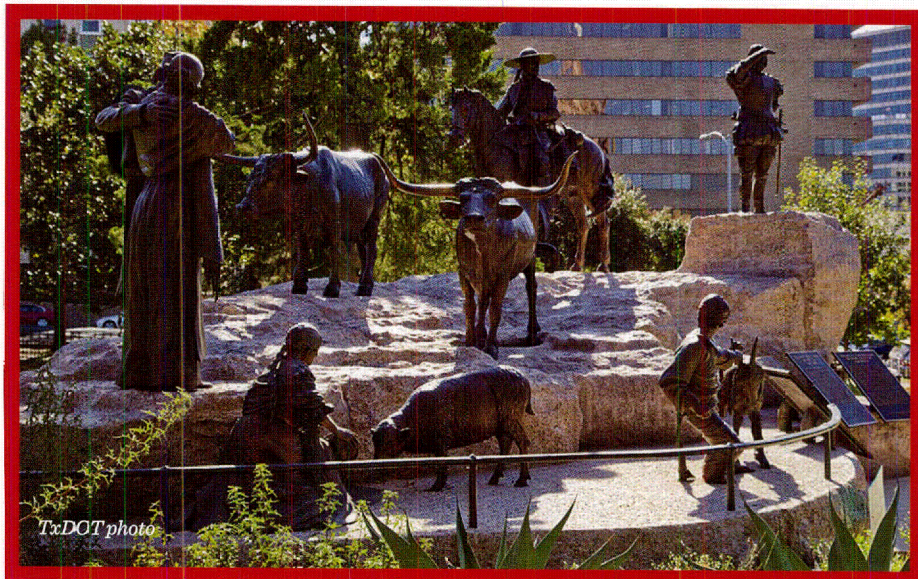


Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier Jane Lundquist (DES).

Last edition's photo featured the Tejano Monument. The monument pays tribute to the contributions of Tejanos to Texas history and culture. Armando Hinojosa of Laredo sculpted the life-sized bronze statues that honor the early Spanish pioneers who settled Texas. The statues are mounted on a 275-ton granite base on the southeast grounds of the Capitol. Five accompanying plaques tell the Tejano story, beginning with the arrival of the Spaniards in the 1500s.

Others correctly identifying the photo were Chris Cowen (BRY), James Norment (BRY), Susan Chavez (TPP), Sandra Chipley (ENV), Laura Goldman (TRV) and Yolanda Guerra (ADM). 



UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

Jan. 4-6

11th Annual Texas
Transportation Forum
(Austin)

Jan. 19

Confederate Heroes Day
(Minimal staff required)

Feb. 15

Presidents Day
(All agencies closed)

Jan. 18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
(All agencies closed)

Jan. 28

Texas Transportation Commission meeting
(Austin)

Feb. 25

Texas Transportation Commission meeting
(Austin)

30 and Going Strong



Celebrating 30 years of iconic campaign

Don't mess with Texas® hits its 30-year milestone this year. To celebrate, the campaign is expanding its message of litter prevention to reach a new generation of Texans.

As part of the 30th celebration, DMWT will collaborate with the Boy Scouts of America and other youth groups to launch the Don't mess with Texas Trash-Off on April 9, the state's single largest litter pickup event. Scouts can earn a Don't mess with Texas patch.

In addition, DMWT will host a series of community cleanup events from April through August. Volunteers who pick up litter at these events can help keep our community clean and play games to win great prizes made possible from our partners.


Be on the lookout for a milestone public service announcement with several of your favorite celebrities and possibly a new spokesperson, who will tout those four infamous words—Don't mess with Texas!

Contests kick off

Our year wouldn't be complete without continuing to offer our youth a chance to show us what DMWT means to them. The third annual Don't mess with Texas Elementary School Art Calendar Contest launches in January, giving students in grades K-5 the chance to be included in the 2017 calendar. The campaign will continue its partnership with the H-E-B and Central Market grocery chains to reward students and teachers for their work.

After its launch last year, the Don't mess with Texas Middle School Can Slogan Contest returns to engage students in the sixth through ninth grades. Students will again submit their original slogans to grace one of the famous red, white and blue DMWT personality trash cans.

The Don't mess with Texas Scholarship program enters its 13th year, partnering with Forestar, a real estate and natural resources company, to reward high school seniors who have taken leadership roles to prevent litter in their communities and build awareness of the DMWT initiative. Three scholarships will be awarded, one for \$6,000 and two for \$2,000.

For more information on these programs visit dontmesswithtexas.org 

My35 makes it big



The Waco District partnered with Lamar Advertising to use unsold billboards on I-35 in the Waco and Temple-Belton areas to promote the My35.org website. Drivers can use the website to get updates on road conditions and projects.

An innovative partnership between TxDOT and Lamar Advertising Company is raising awareness of the My35 website with drivers who need its information most.

My35.org is a website with the latest news, project updates and road conditions for Texas' I-35 corridor — all 588 miles from Mexico to Oklahoma. It is managed by TxDOT staff in the seven districts that contain sections of the crucial interstate.


As the website is expanded and customized, needs and opportunities are constantly being identified. For example, the Waco District provides a number of travel tools in its section for drivers navigating 44 miles of active construction zones.

The district has many ways to get the word out to drivers about rapidly changing conditions in these construction zones, such as email lane-closure notices and a real-time traffic map. But most travelers are just passing through the district on their way to somewhere else. Opportunities to let them know about the website and the information it contains are hard to come by.

Billboards were really the best option for promoting the website to these travelers. However, advertising space is expensive. With no budget for that kind of expense — either in the district or in the Texas A&M Transportation Institute's contract for construction and communications support — buying space was impossible.

Undeterred, Jodi Wheatley, I-35 public information officer for the Waco District, contacted Teresa Lange of Lamar Advertising, one of the largest outdoor advertising companies in North America. Lamar's Waco office is located on the interstate and Lange and her co-workers have benefitted from the district's email notices for several years. She was very receptive to the idea of a public-service partnership program to provide billboards with the My35.org message.

Within just a few weeks, four regular billboards and a message on a brand-new electronic billboard were in place in the Waco and Temple-Belton areas. The ads are on unsold boards and can be moved as locations are sold and others become available. TTI paid for printing the signs as part of its traveler information efforts.

For the minimal cost of printing vinyl signs, a year's worth of display space is now calling attention to My35.org and making drivers more aware of the information it can provide. 



The Lubbock District encourages community spirit by having local school children paint their original designs on several of the district's snowplows. Incorporated into the Farwell ISD design are symbols representing the community and school spirit.

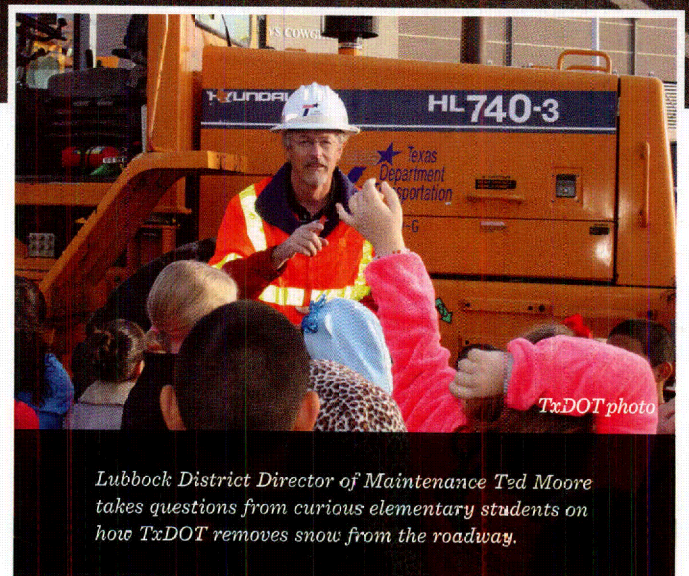
Not your average snowplow

Motorists driving through Cochran, Bailey and Yoakum counties this winter might catch a glimpse of seven very distinct snowplows. Adorned with school mascots and driver safety messages, the plows were designed and painted by area students.

Aimed to cultivate community relations, the Lubbock District snowplow art program has doubled as an avenue for driver and winter weather education.

"The program has become a notable and creative means of educating the public, especially young drivers, not only about safe driving habits but also on the possible hazards motorists face when driving during inclement weather," said Jeremy Dearing, maintenance engineer. "This is the fourth year we've worked with local school districts to paint snowplows."

As part of the school's safety day, students learned about driving in inclement weather that involves snowplows.




Lubbock District Director of Maintenance Ted Moore takes questions from curious elementary students on how TxDOT removes snow from the roadway.

The "Don't Crowd the Plow" campaign includes these tips for driving in those conditions:

- Stay at least five car lengths behind the plow, far from the snow fog; snowplow operators will pull over when it is safe to do so to allow traffic build-up to pass.
- Stay alert as snowplows turn or exit frequently and often with little warning. They may also travel over centerlines or partially into traffic to further improve road conditions.

"We started the program in 2012 with one school and one plow. Over the past few years it's grown to include more schools and snowplows. Seven were painted this year," said Dearing.

"We have a couple of schools so enthused about the program, they'd paint all our plows if we'd let them." 

MILESTONES

NOVEMBER SERVICE AWARDS

DISTRICTS

ABILENE

- 10 Ruth P. Leubner
- 5 Andy J. Shaw

AMARILLO

- 35 Steve R. Johnson
- 30 Charles H. Cave
- 25 Robert F. McKee
- 20 Roy L. Deeds
Raymond D. Martinez Jr.
- 10 Jason L. Prather
- 5 James T. Dye
Paul O. Espinosa
Mark E. Stamps

ATLANTA

- 30 Kenneth L. Icenhower
- 15 Brently R. Harris
Robert A. Swaffar
Regina D. Whitley
- 10 Joseph D. Youngblood
- 5 Ricky L. Hancock
Cathy S. Heldt

AUSTIN

- 35 Loren W. Rice
- 25 Elton H. Anderson Jr.
- 20 Kerry O. Blackmon
Lanny D. Hall
- 15 Daniel A. Gutierrez
- 10 Clinton S. Best

BEAUMONT

- 30 Robert S. Yeates
- 20 Earick S. Adams
Sherry A. Craft
Alejandro M. Ortiz
- 10 Calvin W. Lavergne
- 5 Mark A. Gilder
Prentiss L. Youngblood

BROWNWOOD

- 10 Jeremy D. Robinson
Christopher C. Smith

BRYAN

- 10 Thomas Pickering
- 5 James S. Walker Jr.

CHILDRESS

- 30 James E. Langford
- 10 Paul A. McInturf

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 15 James O. Skidmore
Kenneth Wilson
- 10 Rene G. Alvarado Jr.
- 5 Kristie A. Brink

DALLAS

- 20 Noel S. Paramanatham
- 15 Christopher V. Payne
Don T. Vo
- 10 Ted A. Albright
Carlos N. Antillon
Solomon Bayou
Jeffrey S. Ewing
Andrew R. Juarez
Jeff N. Long
Jesus Saldana Jr.
Heath D. Stewart
- 5 Ricky Coats

EL PASO

- 15 Richard W. Baird
Angelica C. Gonzalez
Raul R. Melendez
Jorge A. Nevarez

FORT WORTH

- 25 Linda B. Stevens
- 10 Allen J. Bain Jr.
Nazrul I. Chowdhury

HOUSTON

- 30 Felix Cornibert
Jeffery A. Earl
Richard K. Henderson
- 15 Andrus L. Harris
Brett H. McLeod
Jamie D. Medina
- 10 Jonathan S. Flowerree
Rodgerick A. White

LAREDO

- 15 Veronica Solis
- 10 Teno Flores III

LUBBOCK

- 25 David Barrera
- 10 Juan D. Alaniz
Kylan A. Francis
Ernesto Garcia Jr.
Stanley W. McNeely
Billy G. Tosh III
- 5 Darrell R. Mick
Nicanor S. Torrez III

LUFKIN

- 25 Dennis J. Biddle
- 5 Timothy S. Martin

ODESSA

- 5 Roberto C. Penaloza
Ricardo O. Rojas

PARIS

- 20 Franklin T. Shearin
- 15 Mark W. Abernathy

PHARR

- 25 Jorge L. Mendoza
Juan M. Mendoza
- 10 Juan A. Sevilla

SAN ANGELO

- 5 Anthony D. Sifuentes

SAN ANTONIO

- 30 Manuel J. Garza
- 20 Chad W. Lux
- 15 Daniel L. Herley
Alejandro Mares
Clint M. Tschirhart

TYLER

- 15 Larry D. Meeks
John C. Oliver
David F. Proctor
- 10 Jerry L. Locke
Shane R. Trantham
- 5 Perry R. Debord

WACO

- 20 Darnley D. Davis
- 10 James M. Roberts
Joel A. Wellborn
Michael J. Yezak
- 5 Jeffrey C. Jackson
Teddy R. Mynar

WICHITA FALLS

- 5 Jamey Barnard

YOAKUM

- 5 Thomas W. Kostelnik

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

ADMINISTRATION

- 20 Janice M. Mullenix
- 10 Jo L. Williams

BRIDGE

- 25 Dean J. Loitz
- 10 Teresa E. Baker
- 5 Julie A. Cerroni
Sung Min Yoon

COMMUNICATIONS

- 20 Blanca M. Del Valle

CONSTRUCTION

- 10 Christopher R. Huetson
Teresa L. Michalk

CONTRACT SERVICES OFFICE

- 10 Scott E. Stephenson

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 10 Renee E. Benn
Mark M. Brown
- 5 Timothy R. Wood

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Jacob E. Singleton
- 10 Joe S. Baker IV
Ashley W. Seider
- 5 Ronald W. Troyer

PROCUREMENT

- 15 Jesse J. Alamanza
Randall D. Alford
Vidal F. Trevino
- 10 Sandra Jowers
- 5 Theresea L. Johnson

PROFESSIONAL PROCUREMENT

- 15 Cheryl A. Rodriguez

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- 30 Teri L. Kaplan

REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT

- 15 Beverly M. West

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 10 Sammie L. Cumby

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

- 20 Robert E. Small

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

- 15 Cleo J. Williams
- 5 Tammye A. Fontenot

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

- 10 Randy C. Caldwell
Larry D. Wright
Harry C. Zachau

DECEMBER SERVICE AWARDS



DISTRICTS

ABILENE

- 25 John G. Quintero
- 20 Tommie J. Jackson
- 15 Randy Baiza
- 5 Jason D. Underwood

AMARILLO

- 30 Phillip R. Keener
- 15 Marvin E. Miller
- 5 James M. Reed

ATLANTA

- 30 Roger W. Ledbetter

AUSTIN

- 25 John C. Newnam
- 20 Daniel E. Lagesse
Victor M. Vargas
- 15 Frank G. Gietl
Stanley R. Kent
Ben J. Parada
Lucas J. Short
Laura J. Shull
- 10 John A. Zamiska

BEAUMONT

- 10 Eddie C. Dry
Charles E. Evans

BROWNWOOD

- 35 Alva C. Witcher Jr.
- 20 Jerry Sandoval
- 10 Ricky W. Williams Sr.

BRYAN

- 15 Patricia M. Eifert
- 5 Randell D. Miller

CHILDRESS

- 5 Bradley D. Cribbs
Scott W. Perkins

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 10 Katherine M. Hill-Briones
Mario G. Longoria
Julian Ybarra
- 5 Robin R. Ramirez

DALLAS

- 30 Ronald G. Fitts
Steven L. Power
- 15 Ines Molina
Donald Robertson Jr.
Harris B. Ryan III
- 10 Tamanna Ali
Donald R. Baskerville
Lawrence D. Frederick
Steven Schunemann
Jesse W. Teel

- 5 Yasin A. Alkarboly
Bobby D. Frankum
Justin A. Meyers

EL PASO

- 20 Guillermo S. Hernandez
- 5 Jorge Balcazar Jr.

FORT WORTH

- 20 Charlotte S. Seales
Charles B. Wier IV
- 10 Cynthia De La Garza
Kenneth M. Holt
James C. Putnam
Michael J. Redd
- 5 Dustin D. Marten
Trig S. Stanley

HOUSTON

- 30 Danny R. Gazaway
John J. Marullo
Sylvester E. Onwas
Paul I. Tannous
- 25 Todd A. Kahla Sr.
- 20 Suling Cao
Stanley W. Cooper
- 15 Jason O. Case
Alex Zavala
- 10 Jimmy D. Higginson
Irfan A. Syed
- 5 Milad Ajir
Sundi L. Price
Richard B. Russell
Junzhou Zhu

LAREDO

- 25 Cristobal M. Rodriguez
- 20 Anestacio J. Cantu Sr.
Margarito F. Perez Jr.
- 15 Arnoldo Garza Jr.
Vicente Yanez III
- 10 Charles Fite
Alfredo Pena

LUBBOCK

- 10 Dan Long
- 5 Dustin L. Harper
Ramon Quintero
Jose M. Vasquez

LUFKIN

- 20 Gregory D. Gardner
- 10 John P. White

ODESSA

- 25 Jesus A. Matta
- 20 Oscar C. Dominguez
- 5 Juan A. Hernandez
John Villanueva

PARIS

- 20 Robert W. Powell
- 15 Marty G. Charles

PHARR

- 20 Jesus Limon Jr.
- 15 Roberto Agueros
Aaron Garcia
Joel E. Garcia
Francisco Rodriguez
- 10 Carlos R. Arellano
Sergio Pina

SAN ANGELO

- 20 Freddie L. Schmidt
- 15 Francis L. Strube

SAN ANTONIO

- 30 Homer U. Bermea
- 20 Russell W. Henk
- 15 Clayton P. Ripps
Frances L. Strube
- 10 Danny G. Ray
- 5 Maria N. Bolanos
Kevin W. Long Jr.

TYLER

- 25 Rodney D. Mathis
- 20 Daniel E. Fisher
Richard P. Mathis
- 15 Pamela A. Phillips
- 10 Stuart D. Boyd
- 5 Brad J. Rumbo

WACO

- 25 Cathy K. Wadkins
- 20 Rodney N. Law
Jimmy L. Mullings
Darren W. Poe
- 10 David R. Schmidt
Marvin C. Williams

WICHITA FALLS

- 20 David M. Rohmer

YOAKUM

- 10 Jerry J. Faltisek
Stanley C. Hopfe
- 5 Keith R. Varner

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

AVIATION

- 5 Joseph R. Hindman

BRIDGE

- 15 Marie M. Fisk

COMMUNICATIONS

- 15 Terrence L. Tyler
- 5 Gene P. Powell Jr.

CONSTRUCTION

- 15 Reyna C. Leal
- 10 Sean L. Baker

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 10 Jason W. Barrett
Clay Churchill
- 5 Sandra K. Chipley

FINANCE

- 35 Lanny C. Wadle
- 10 Stuart R. Hanzlik
- 5 Mary H. Aguilar
Filecia S. Bohuslav

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Woody W. Patterson
- 15 Rachele E. Koczman
Kimberly L. Loche
- 10 David W. Daugherty
Jesus J. Tobar
- 5 Gary E. Moore

MAINTENANCE

- 15 Tasker H. Hudson

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

- 10 Angela L. Parker

PROCUREMENT

- 25 Harry Deba
- 15 Herbert W. Finney II
Donna J. Redus

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- 5 Travis L. Madison

RIGHT OF WAY

- 15 Gustav E. Cannon

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- 25 Julie M. Pollard

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 30 Annirene S. Liberto
- 20 Carl C. Moseley
Homer Villarreal
- 15 Brenda K. Arnold
- 10 Robert H. Holmes

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

- 30 Tracy F. Tellman
- 10 Jaime R. Ruiz
Robert L. Shuff
- 5 William J. Heacker
Ron R. Holt

MILESTONES 2015

SEPTEMBER RETIREE REPORT

DISTRICTS

AMARILLO

14 Rocky D. Andrews
Willie K. Turner Jr.

CHILDRESS

34 Robert M. Hosea

DALLAS

28 Scott J. Bonds
25 Wilfred D. Chabot

HOUSTON

37 Allen Clark III
16 Arthur F. Salako
9 Marvin J. Sekula

SAN ANTONIO

27 Ronald E. Korzekwa

TYLER

16 Lloyd G. Rice

WACO

28 Lisa A. Haussner
25 Richard P. Polansky

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

FLEET OPERATIONS

17 Bruce G. Brooks

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMING

25 Earl W. Bernhard

NOVEMBER RETIREE REPORT

DISTRICTS

AUSTIN

28 Mary C. McDaniels

BEAUMONT

22 Adam Ceasar
Cynthia L. Halligan

BRYAN

7 George R. Foster

FORT WORTH

30 Rohit T. Parikh

HOUSTON

27 Lovey M. Reynolds
11 Juan S. Saldana

PHARR

28 Bernie L. Holder

SAN ANTONIO

21 James H. Bourg

TYLER

19 Lawrence M. Jenniges Jr.
18 Michael D. Baker

WACO

27 Jim B. Reed

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

CONSTRUCTION

28 David B. Belser

RIGHT OF WAY

12 Pamela C. Born

TRAVEL

29 Rebecca L. Barker

IN MEMORIAM

DISTRICTS

DALLAS

Steven Suggs
Right of Way Agent
Years of Service: 16
DOD: 11/17/15

PHARR

Concepcion Flores Sr.
Years of Service: 31
DOD: 10/24/15

SAN ANGELO

Jerry M. Fields
Bridge Inspector
Years of Service: 35
DOD: 11/5/15

John P. McClure Jr.
Maintenance Technician
Years of Service: 27
DOD: 9/29/15

DIVISIONS

HUMAN RESOURCES

Delores Ouellette
Years of Service: 31
DOD: 10/11/15

FLEET OPERATIONS

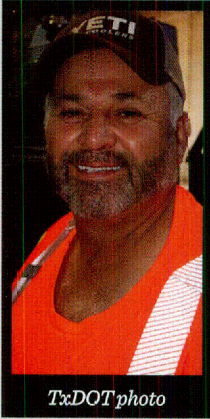
Tomas Tynes
Motor Vehicle Technician
Years of Service: 3
DOD: 12/6/15

Editor's Note

Sharp-eyed readers might notice a new look in this issue for a few regular TN features. We're rolling out redesigned layouts for the Message From... column, Five Things You Need To Know, Milestones and Talk Around the State. Give us your feedback at TNideas@txdot.gov.

TxDOT Family Members Chime In

What is your favorite Super Bowl snack?



RUBEN RENTERIA

HALE COUNTY
MAINTENANCE
TECHNICIAN,
LUBBOCK DISTRICT

"I would have to say hot wings with my special barbecue sauce on them. It's a secret recipe I've used for about 25 years. The game is fun to watch, but it's really about good food and spending time together."



NOEL RAMIREZ


SPECIAL CREW -
PAVEMENT STRIPER,
ODESSA DISTRICT

"Give me some taquitos with guacamole and salsa to spice it up. And kick in some jalapeño wraps (peppers stuffed with cream cheese, wrapped in bacon and cooked) on the side."



PATRICIA FEARS

POLK COUNTY
MAINTENANCE MANAGER,
LUFKIN DISTRICT

"No snacks – a full course meal. Country-style ribs, deviled eggs, stuffed jalapeños, pinto beans and homemade potato salad at every Super Bowl. They are top-secret game recipes! And if the Steelers are playing, there is a lot of screaming and hollering at my house." 

Bright Lights

Exceptional efforts gain notice

The Southgate Church of Christ sits near the busy intersection of U.S. 277 and Canal Road in San Angelo. Crashes and near misses are common.

As a result of a recent fatality at the intersection, San Angelo City Councilman Rodney Fleming received numerous calls from constituents about the situation.

The intersection is in the city limits, but it's in TxDOT's hands. Five roads coming into one intersection with only two stop signs and speeds up to 65 mph make this intersection a magnet for crashes.

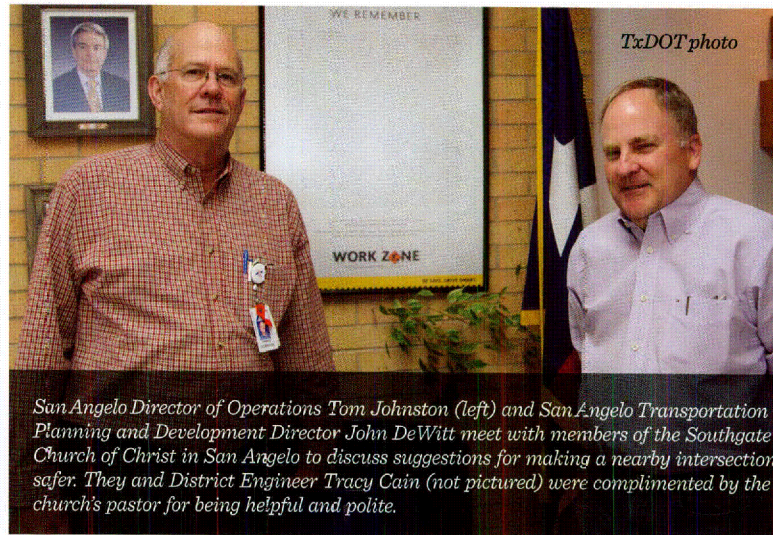
"Within the last four to five months, after the last death, we started trying to do something else about it," said Fleming.

TxDOT met with Fleming and other concerned citizens and suggested a reduction in speed, a new on-ramp and the possibility of closing the frontage road that some find an inconvenience.

To ensure the Southgate Church of Christ was part of the discussion, San Angelo District Engineer Tracy Cain, Transportation Planning and Development Director John DeWitt and Director of Operations Tom Johnston met with Minister Paul Shero and others to hear their concerns and offer options to make the busy intersection safer.


Minister Shero was so impressed with these efforts that he wrote to thank Cain, DeWitt and Johnston for their calm demeanors and reconciliatory attitudes toward solving a difficult traffic situation.

"These men were amazing. They came to the meetings fully prepared. There was never a question they couldn't answer. They were cool-headed and extremely polite. They never promised something they could not deliver but were obviously interested in our problems. What could have been a hostile meeting was defused by these men," Shero wrote.



San Angelo Director of Operations Tom Johnston (left) and San Angelo Transportation Planning and Development Director John DeWitt meet with members of the Southgate Church of Christ in San Angelo to discuss suggestions for making a nearby intersection safer. They and District Engineer Tracy Cain (not pictured) were complimented by the church's pastor for being helpful and polite.

TxDOT is working to improve the intersection according to these discussions and to monitor the results for future improvements.

Minister Shero concluded his letter saying, "I have never had to deal with [TxDOT] before but I have had many interactions with other government agencies. Many times, what I saw was arrogance and power plays. Thank you for being the exception." 

Read more compliments like these in Bright Lights on Crossroads: <http://crossroads/brightlights/>. Send information on any thank-you emails, letters or calls you or your co-workers receive to AskTxDOT so we can continue to shine Bright Lights on TxDOT employee achievements.



125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

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<http://crossroads/>

Weight loss is

mind over matter


Bobby Neely, special job supervisor for the bridge crew in the Dallas District, decided it was time for a change. Neely has been with the state for more than 10 years. On average, he works 50 plus hours a week and is on call year-round. Even though he is a busy man, he has the determination and motivation to live a healthier lifestyle for himself and his family. This is his journey to wellness.

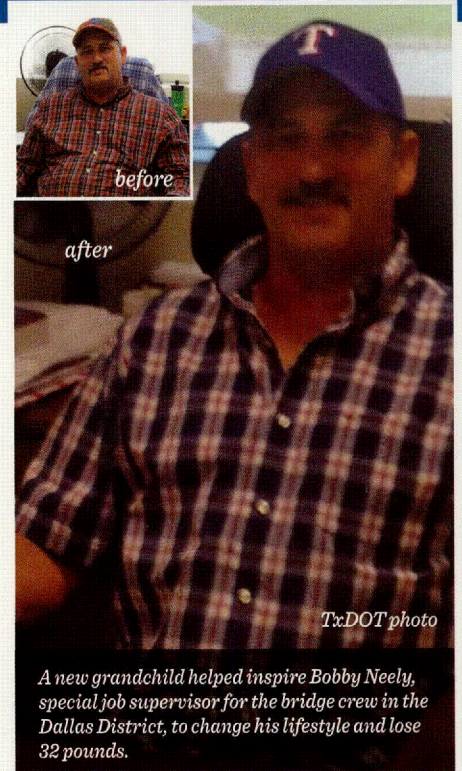
I had just recently had another grandbaby and while visiting with a co-worker, I realized I needed to make some changes if I wanted to be around to watch him grow up.

I have five children and seven grandchildren. I want to be healthy enough to enjoy sports with them and to fish in my spare time.

I guess anyone trying to lose weight or live a healthy lifestyle would be a role model for me.

I started to try to lose weight about mid-April of 2015. The biggest obstacle has been just making up my mind to do it. So far, I've lost a total of 32 pounds.

If you want to live a healthier lifestyle, just make your mind up and start. 



TxDOT photo

A new grandchild helped inspire Bobby Neely, special job supervisor for the bridge crew in the Dallas District, to change his lifestyle and lose 32 pounds.

Contact your local Wellness Program coordinator to learn about the wellness program and start your journey today!

