



HIGH WATER

RESPONDING TO THE MAY FLOODS



Message from the Executive Director

It's July, that time of year that school children treasure and adults long to recapture: summer! It also means two familiar constants in Texas: 100-degree temperatures and orange construction cones aplenty.

Summer is our busy season, and while that's a good thing, it also means that our workers on the road must be extra cautious. I have my own experience and appreciation for just such caution.

During one of my summers between semesters at Texas A&M, I worked for a road construction contractor out of Abilene. My job was to run stakes and pull up roots, collect wood, sticks, anything large that was left by the grading and preparation of the road for materials and eventual surfacing. We'd start work very early in the morning and work all day. By 2 p.m. or 3 p.m., it would easily be 110 degrees—in the shade! It was brutal work for me at the time, and it tested my body's ability to maintain and focus on the task at hand. It was easy to get excessively tired, complacent and at times, lethargic, while working in the extreme heat around heavy equipment. Nothing compares to manual labor outside on a scorching Texas day. It doesn't just drain your energy; severe heat can be a killer.

It's that potential for life-threatening danger that requires us to continuously remind employees to be extra cautious on the job. I know we talk a lot about forming and exercising good safety habits, but nothing we do is more important than keeping ourselves and others safe. You work hard every day to serve the people of Texas, but those efforts will be significantly minimized if you can't get home safely to your families.

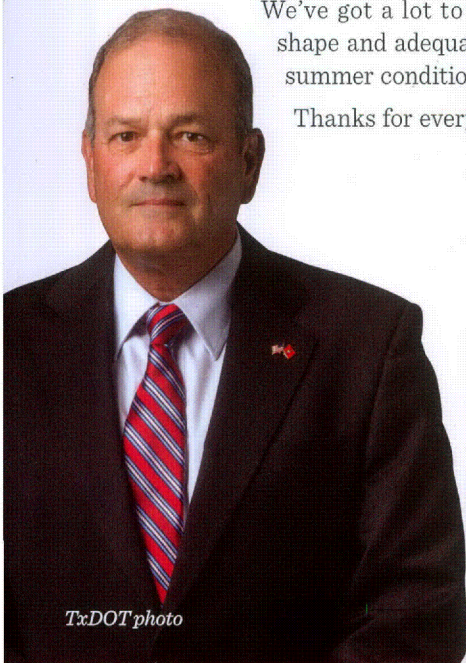
So as we approach the next few months of intense sunshine and temperatures that hover in the hundreds, let's keep in mind some simple steps that will help make our work a lot more bearable and safer:

- Stay hydrated. Drink 16 to 32 ounces of cool fluids every hour, whether you feel like you need to or not.
- Take frequent breaks. Don't rush through your duties. A slower, but steady pace reduces stress on the body and allows you to stay focused on the task at hand.
- Occasionally check in with your co-workers, and be on the lookout for any signs of heat-related illnesses like clammy and moist skin, extreme weakness, dizziness or excessive fatigue. If you or a coworker are experiencing any of these symptoms, request assistance immediately.
- Protect your face, arms and hands from overexposure. Severe, consistent sunburn is a precursor to skin cancer. Be sure to wear your TxDOT-provided personal protective equipment.

If you want more information on working in and surviving the Texas summer season, be sure to look on our Safety portal on Crossroads.

We've got a lot to accomplish this summer, but we need everybody in top shape and adequately protected to be productive and effective under extreme summer conditions.

Thanks for everything you do for TxDOT, and keep up the great work! 



Semper Fi,

J. F. Weber
Executive Director

Watch General Weber's videos on <http://crossroads/>



TN MAGAZINE JULY-AUGUST 2015

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TxDOT photo



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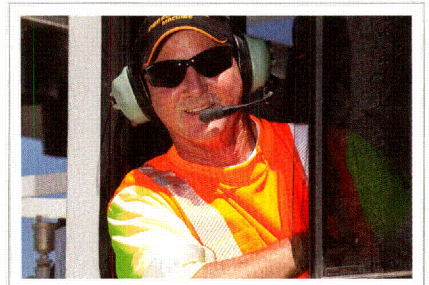
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5 THINGS

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

1

Deputy Executive Director John Barton has been named professor of practice for the Zachry Department of Civil Engineering at Texas A&M University. Barton will work with the university's Chancellor's Area 41 Institute, a research think tank that will identify and help solve crucial challenges that face the state and nation in the next three decades. The institute will focus on issues such as transportation, water and energy. Barton is a Texas A&M graduate.

2

There are many ways cyber criminals can spread harmful malware to TxDOT computers. Don't be a target! The new IT Security Training will provide simple steps you can take to help protect yourself and TxDOT. For more information, visit TxDOTNow on the Crossroads website.


3

De Juana Lozada is the new director of the Travel Information Division. She previously served as a civilian public affairs officer for the U.S. Department of Defense and as assistant director of communications for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Kristin Alexander is the new director of the Compliance Office. Most recently, Alexander served as a managing senior auditor at the Texas State Auditor's Office.

4

In April, the Texas Transportation Commission awarded contracts for the second round of Proposition 1-funded projects. The 23 projects (out of 200 planned projects) encompass nearly \$168 million worth of roadway construction, rehabilitation and restoration. Specific projects awarded include the construction of additional lanes on U.S. 277 in Archer County, the reconstruction and widening of FM 1637 in McLennan County and the addition of new passing lanes on SH 176 in Andrews County.

5


After eight months of assessment, process change and technology implementation, TxDOT's Early Payment Program launched in April. The program gives our vendor community the opportunity to get paid faster. It also provides a discount for TxDOT. The new technology also integrates into our PeopleSoft Enterprise Resource Planning System. 


TALLEY WINS SAFETY SLOGAN CONTEST IN CHILDRESS

In the Childress District, safety is always a priority as everyone is considered family. Planning, time outs, communication and identifying hazards are just some of the ways employees ensure and promote safety. To further enhance its safety program, the district challenged each section to create a safety slogan in a contest to create a new safety campaign.

Crew Chief Jamie Talley in the Hardeman County Maintenance Section submitted the winning idea.

A father of four, Talley wanted the district employees in safety-sensitive positions to have a visual reminder every day of why they work safe. His idea to have a picture of employees' children spelling out the word "safety" is now a banner on every maintenance section's gate. As employees leave and return daily, they see pictures of the children of their co-workers, which is a constant reminder of why they practice safety in everything they do.


Your coworkers, family and friends are counting on you. Remember: safety never stops. 



TxDOT photo



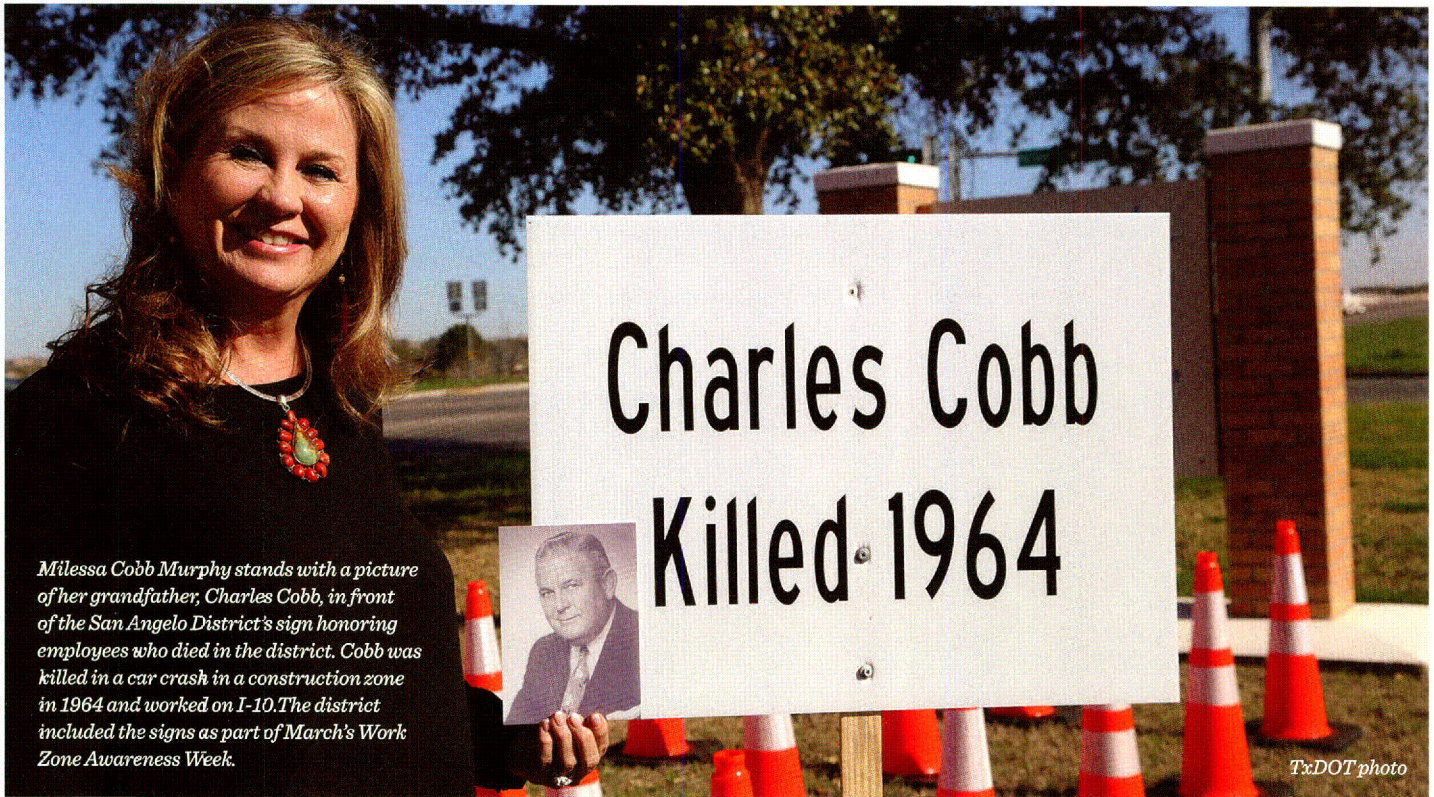
Going home at the end of the day: Priceless.

SAFETY  **ZERO** and America's 20th Anniversary, 2011-2015 **Safety Never Stops!**

The winning slogan features employees' children spelling out the word "safety" to remind employees to practice safety in everything they do.



Crew Chief Jamie Talley of Hardeman County in the Childress District stands in front of one of several banners that feature his slogan.



Not forgotten:

San Angelo District's tribute touches one family's life

When the San Angelo District placed 146 cones on their front lawn for Work Zone Awareness Week this past March (one cone for each life lost in a work zone crash last year), they had no idea of the magnitude and the impact three small signs with the names of the individuals killed in the district would have – especially on one family.

What happened next was serendipitous. On March 25, a woman from Dallas drove by the district office and saw the signs in the front lawn. She did a double take, turned around and drove by again. One of the signs featured the name Charles Cobb, her grandfather who was killed while employed with the San Angelo District.


“My heart was quivering and I started to cry,” Milessa Cobb Murphy said. “That TxDOT would remember Pappy in this way was just so special to me,” she said.

Murphy had been at Lake Nasworthy that morning when she drove by the district office. She immediately called her father

and said, “You’re not going to believe what just happened!”

Murphy is an artist and was in San Angelo for the Stribling Art Extravaganza where she was showing two of her paintings. District PIO Karen Threlkeld invited the local TV station to interview Murphy and she was able to share her story with heartfelt emotion.

“It was just one of those special moments,” said Threlkeld. “Charles Cobb was an employee who we didn’t know much about since he was killed so many years ago. And now, because Milessa stopped by, we know the whole story and have made a new friend.”

Charles Cobb was a right-of-way attorney for the department when he was killed in a car crash on SH 71 in a construction zone on Nov. 7, 1964. At the time of his death, he was serving on the Governors’ Texas Condemnation Task Force and was going to a meeting in Austin with the Governor. Another attorney with him was also killed. 

“

That TxDOT would remember Pappy in this way was just so special to me

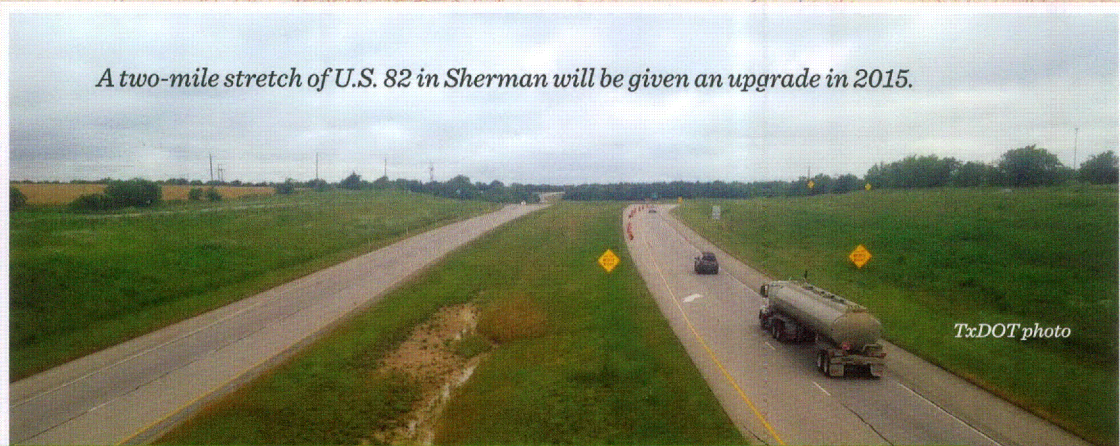
—Milessa Cobb

”

AROUND THE STATE

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

A two-mile stretch of U.S. 82 in Sherman will be given an upgrade in 2015.



TxDOT photo


Rebuilding of U.S. Highway 82 The rebuilding of a 2-mile stretch of U.S. 82 in Sherman was given the green light in March. The \$13 million project, funded by Proposition 1, involves milling the 4-lane road and laying fresh roadway.

The project begins at the top of the U.S. Highway 82 bridge over Frisco Road and continues to FM 1417.

Follow the Paris District on Twitter @TxDOTParis. 

Tomball Tollway Grand Opening April saw the grand opening of the first phase of the Tomball Tollway, an extension of SH 249, northwest of Houston. To celebrate, residents were invited to “Stroll the Toll” before it opened to the public. A stretch of road from Spring Cypress to just south of Tomball was open for everyone to walk or run before vehicles were allowed. More than 500 people took advantage of the opportunity.

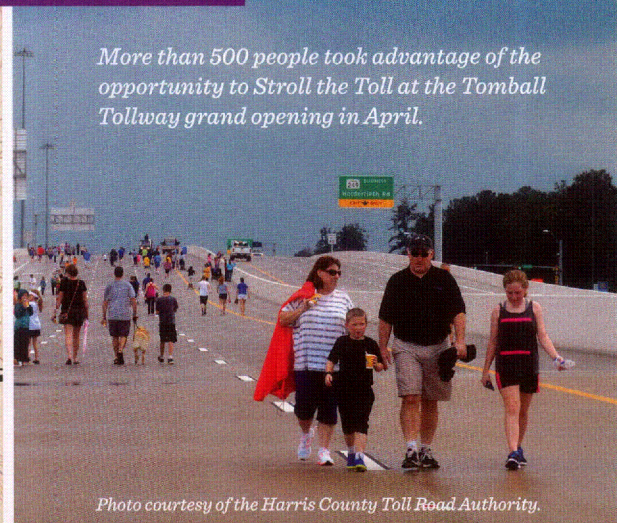
The road is four lanes in both directions. The toll is \$1.45 to travel the entire 6-mile length of the road.

Phase 2 of the project will extend the Tomball Tollway 1.5 miles north of FM 2920 to the Harris County line and add new bridges at Spring Creek. 

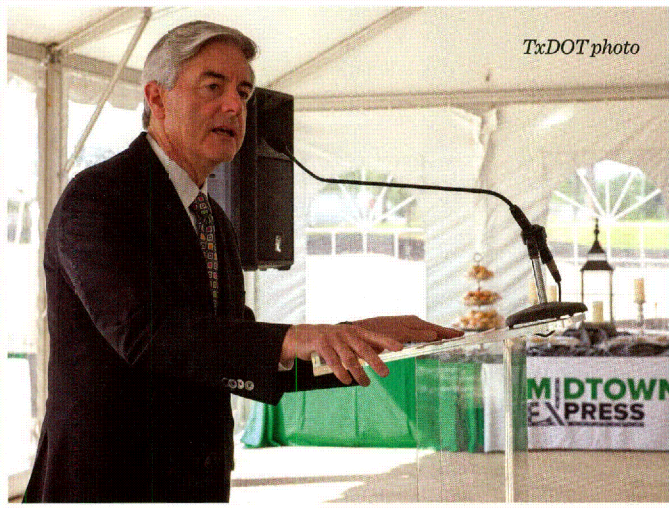
The new Tomball Tollway is four lanes in both directions for 6 miles.



More than 500 people took advantage of the opportunity to Stroll the Toll at the Tomball Tollway grand opening in April.



Texas Transportation Commissioner Victor Vandergriff speaks at the Midtown Express project groundbreaking in Irving. The project will expand SH 183, SH 114 and a portion of Loop 12 between Dallas and Fort Worth and add toll lanes.




TxDOT photo

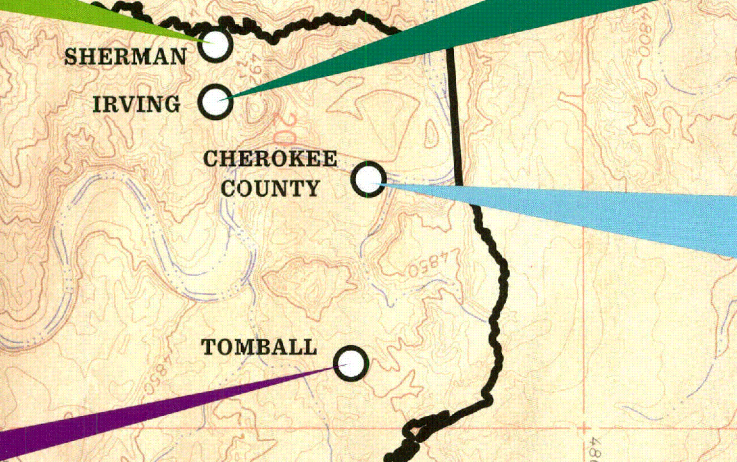
Midtown Express Groundbreaking The 28-mile Midtown Express project to improve mobility around a primary artery between Dallas and Fort Worth celebrated its official start with a ceremonial groundbreaking in late April. The project, previously known as the SH 183 Managed Lanes Project, will expand SH 183, SH 114 and a portion of Loop 12. The project is expected to be completed in 2018.

SH 183 is listed on TxDOT's "100 Congested Roadways" and has not had a major expansion since 1973. The \$850 million project includes the design, reconstruction and rehabilitation of deteriorating roadways and the addition of managed toll lanes. The roadways will connect Fort Worth and Dallas, as well as Bedford, Euless and Irving. Also included are the new TEXpress lanes, intended to keep traffic moving at least 50 mph.

Several transportation officials and local leaders spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony, including Texas Transportation Commissioner Victor Vandergriff, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley, as well as representatives from the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

"This is a great day for Irving," Jenkins said. "Big things happen when we all come together."

For updates on the project, visit drivemidtown.com 




Goff Named General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year

Clint Goff was named this year's General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year by the Aviation Division for his lifelong dedication and commitment to the Cherokee County Airport and the community that surrounds it.

"Clint approaches his job with fervor and passion that is unmatched in our state's aviation community," said Aviation Division Director David Fulton. "His contributions to the Cherokee County Airport are almost unquantifiable. He is more than deserving of this honor."

Goff started working at the Cherokee County Airport while he was in high school and became a part-time county airport employee in his early twenties. With considerable talent and dedication, he has quickly worked his way into becoming a full-time airport manager.

He was instrumental in the creation of the county's Airport Advisory Board. He made sure the members included appointees from local businesses, the president of the local economic development corporation and airport tenants.

He scheduled meetings with key local officials to bring them up to speed on the programs and opportunities available through the Aviation Division to address a number of issues at the airport. 



TxDOT photo

Clint Goff (center) with Aviation Division Director David Fulton (left) and Executive Director Joe Weber. Goff received the Aviation Division's General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year award.



TxDOT photo

Trees, branches, rocks and mud were just some of the debris workers cleared away after the storms.



TxDOT photo

Water covered roadways in many areas of the Austin District.



TxDOT photo

Roads looked more like rivers in some areas around Houston.



TxDOT photo

Damage to some roads was incredibly severe.

HIGH WATER

TxDOT RESPONDS TO THE MAY FLOODS

Heavy rain and severe flooding across the state over the Memorial Day weekend concluded the wettest May on record for Texas this year, devastating communities and killing more than two dozen people.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared states of disaster in 70 counties damaged by tornadoes, heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and flooding. In areas like Austin and Houston, streets became rivers and bridges were washed out. The storm flooded hundreds of homes and stranded thousands of drivers.

TxDOT crews from around the state — about 484 maintenance employees — did their part during and after the storms to keep residents safe by closing flooded roads, rerouting traffic, clearing debris and assessing damage to bridges and roadways. They used portable message signs and the DriveTexas highway condition system to alert drivers to unsafe conditions during the deluge.

The storms spread across the state and many districts were affected. Here are just a few stories.

Atlanta District

The Atlanta District — already waterlogged from 30 inches of rain in three months — faced strong storms and a reported tornado. Flash flooding closed roads and winds blew trees down on the roadways.

“It’s been a challenge for our crews to keep up with all the clearing work with one storm passing through after another,” said Marcus Sandifer, public information officer for the district.

The Red River also flooded, cresting at 34 feet. Flood stage is 24 feet. Highways between Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas had to be closed, causing detours more than 100 miles out of the way for some

motorists. TxDOT crews manned the closed highways around the clock for several days until waters receded to safe levels and roads could be reopened.

Austin District

Rain fell at a rate of 4 to 7 inches an hour in some parts of the Austin District on Memorial Day. The Blanco River surged to 44 feet high, more than 10 feet above its previous record high of 32 feet set in 1926.

Many surface streets in the Austin Metro area flooded. Flooded roads in Williamson County stranded TxDOT employees in the field and at the office for several hours. Crews worked to repair asphalt that had been washed away.

Three significant bridges were washed out or damaged. Many county roads were flooded and several were destroyed. Asphalt was stripped away or popped off in places and more than 124 TxDOT employees worked throughout the weekend.

Brownwood and Bryan Districts

Lampasas County in the Brownwood District was also hit by a tornado during the storm. TxDOT crews cleaned up FM 2313 afterward, taking away trees and replacing damaged signs.

The Bryan District had 57 roads closed due to high water. Four of those roads were washed out.

Houston District

Houston has seen it all but the Memorial Day storms shook even this great city. Some locations received up to


11 inches of rain in a 24-hour period.

Bayous were over their banks, major freeways were underwater, hundreds of homes and vehicles were flooded and a number of people were missing and feared dead. Some otherwise dry areas looked like lakes. Roads meant for vehicles were better suited to small boats.

District staff went into emergency mode, keeping media organizations — including national news outlets — updated on road conditions. Warnings, advisories and updates were shared on social media. Staff at TranStar monitored road conditions and answered hundreds of phone calls. They updated closure information on the TranStar website and on dynamic message signs across the district.

Maintenance sections assisted with traffic control and recovery efforts. Crews cleared drainage systems clogged by debris and barricaded flooded roadways. They brought in heavy equipment to clear roads and supported first responders throughout the area.

“I am proud of the dedication of our personnel. While some of our employees may have been impacted themselves by the storm, they came in and provided much-needed assistance to the citizens,” said Quincy Allen, Houston district engineer.

“The blue and amber lights on TxDOT vehicles that could be seen across the many state roads in the district let people know we were there for them and working hard to keep them safe.” 

TxDOT photo



TxDOT crews get to work clearing a debris-covered bridge on FM 2288 in the San Angelo District.

GOOD WORK

— GETS —
RECOGNIZED

TxDOT crews performed outstanding work during the many emergencies the state faced in the May storms. Their work didn't go unnoticed. Here are some comments from the TxDOT Facebook page.

Pavement damage on FM 2288 in the San Angelo District.

TxDOT photo

Thank you to all TxDOT and first responders! You are the best department of transportation in the country!

KIRSTIN HAAS SHINE

Thanks, TxDOT! We appreciate all that you have done and are doing to restore our roadways to make them safe and clear for us!

STACY JOHNSON

Immense gratitude to [TxDOT] staff and all emergency responders for your work and sense of commitment.

JEANENE STERMER

Thank you to all employees of TxDOT!

MONICA KUNTSCHER RUSH

Thank you for making Texas beautiful again and roads safe for us to travel on!

LYDIA HARRISON-FRANCK

"As Texans we will rebuild." This is why we recently moved to the great state of Texas! Our thanks to all who are working tirelessly to rebuild the damage done by this historic weather!

JOAN KEENER DAVIS

God bless [TxDOT employees] for their hard work to rebuild.

FAUSTINA RIOS TIJERINA

They've got a big job on their hands! Don't run over them!

LINDA PARKS

Thank you ... to all the diligent workers out there!

VALERIE DALTON

Thank you TxDOT for all you do to keep my family in Texas safe. Will pray for your safety, too. What a wonderful team. God bless Texas.

NORMA LUNDY EVATT

Thank you everyone who is helping.

CADY BROWNE KENDRICK

Huge thanks for all the hard work of crews working to clear the effects of this crazy weather.

RACHEL LANDOLT

Thank you to all who are working to get our roads and bridges useable. Be safe out there.

BARBARA STINNETT

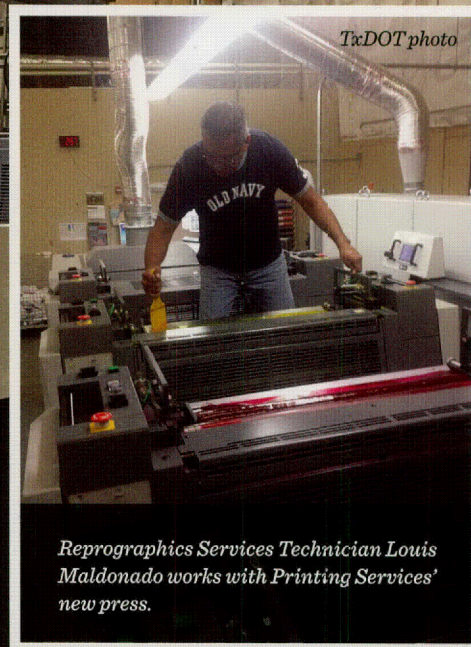
Thank you to all the TxDOT employees for all your hard work.

RITA HOLMBERG WOODMAN

Thank you TxDOT employees for working tirelessly to keep things going.

CINDY DURHAM SAULTER 

Printing Services recently retired its old perfector press and installed a Ryobi 754G XL. The new press is faster, easier to set up and has outstanding quality.



Reprographics Services Technician Louis Maldonado works with Printing Services' new press.

STOP THE PRESSES

TxDOT photo

Printing Services gets new machine

After 30 years of dedicated printing services for TxDOT, the Heidelberg MOVP perfector press finally retired. In February, the printing plant installed a Ryobi 754G XL with an aqueous coater, a water-based lacquer coating that allows paper to be recycled and does not emit harmful byproducts. The Heidelberg was replaced because it had become obsolete and cost the department an average of \$60,000 annually for repairs. The change has been like night and day.

Instead of using 2,000 sheets of paper to get the proper registration for a project — that's the alignment of the four color layers of cyan, yellow, magenta and black — the new press knocks it out in 500.

In addition to saving paper, the quicker alignment saves a considerable amount of time. It used to take two hours to get projects ready on the press. Now it takes about 30 minutes. Tony Ortega, reprographics services tech, hopes that can be whittled to a mere 15 minutes.

The press is making an impression. In its first few months at TxDOT, it has made more than 1 million impressions for brochures, booklets, posters, pocket folders and other materials. Requests for four-color and coated (glossy, satin and UV protectant) projects are on the rise from TxDOT and the other agencies that Printing Services serves.


The new press can run up to 16,000 impressions per hour versus the top speed of 7,000 from the Heidelberg. The press is highly automated with an automatic blanket and roller cleaning and semi-automatic plate changing. The prepress department can send ink profiles directly to the press, which sets ink keys automatically and adjusts for the proper sheet size and thickness.

"Although we can produce the printing faster with outstanding quality and less spoilage, we still request at least 10 working days on most print jobs," said Ortega. "Larger quantities may require more time but we always accommodate if possible when something is needed quicker."

Even with the faster machine, Printing Services remains a hub of activity.

"Since we no longer need to outsource print work to the private sector and everything stays in house, we manage to stay very busy. We have day shift and night shift crews that allow us to make all of our deadlines," said Ortega.

The upgrade also included an Epson proofer that includes a computer-to-plate system to burn plates for the press. All of these improvements allow Printing Services to bring work back into the plant that it had been outsourcing, including the Texas Highways calendar.

"I've supervised and managed some of the best commercial print shops in Austin for 33 years and I know we can compete with any commercial print shop, when it comes to quality," said Ortega. 

When Gov. Greg Abbott delivered his first State of the State Address in February, he named transportation as one of five emergency items for the legislative session that had begun just a month earlier. Calling it a “sad day in Texas when a guy in a wheelchair can move faster than traffic on our congested roads,” he challenged legislators to send more money to transportation, and to do so without raising taxes, fees, tolls or debt.

By the end of the 84th Legislative Session, lawmakers had answered the challenge, and upped the ante, by passing landmark legislation that could put more money into transportation coffers than in any other time in the state’s history.

What they settled on was Senate Joint Resolution 5 — now known as Proposition 7 — authored by Sen. Robert Nichols and sponsored by Rep. Joe Pickett. The revolutionary legislation would allow a portion of sales tax and motor vehicle sales tax revenue — both usually deposited into the state’s General Fund — to be redirected to the State Highway Fund.

Under the legislation that passed, up to \$2.5 billion in state sales tax revenue would go to the State Highway Fund beginning in fiscal year 2018, and in FY 2020, 35 percent of motor vehicle sales and rental tax revenue would go to transportation.

Some fail-safe measures were built into the legislation. Voters must first approve the change in an election this November, and certain funding thresholds



have to be met before any transfers can occur. At least \$28 billion in general sales tax must be collected each year before any money goes to the State Highway Fund, and the state must receive a minimum of \$5 billion in

Also built into the legislation is the ability for lawmakers to reduce this funding in any given year with approval by both chambers.

The passage of SJR 5 comes on the heels of another

“ We understand that this is taxpayers’ money and we’re committed to being good stewards of it ”

—Executive Director Joe Weber

motor vehicles sales and rental tax revenue before transportation can collect.

If voters give the constitutional amendment the green light, the State Highway Fund stands to receive \$2.5 billion in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, another \$2.9 billion in FY 2020 and \$3 billion in FY 2021.

proposal, Proposition 1, that voters approved in 2014. It directed half of the money in the state’s rainy day fund to transportation. That move netted \$1.74 billion for the State Highway Fund that will be used to rehabilitate 800 miles, add nearly 500 miles of new capacity, widen or replace 114 bridges and improve safety on 159 miles

of rural highways around the state.”


“We are already making good on a promise to deliver projects from Proposition 1, and we’ll do the same for SJR 5, if voters approve it,” said Executive Director Joe Weber.

“We understand that this is taxpayers’ money and we’re committed to being good stewards of it, and to deliver projects that will honor the trust that Texans have placed in the department,” he said.

Proposition 1 will continue to flow to transportation coffers. Lawmakers appropriated another \$2.4 billion for the fiscal year 2016-2017 biennium.

In another sweeping move for transportation, legislators also voted to end the practice of using State Highway Fund dollars for other-than-transportation purposes. For years, some of the revenue collected for the fund from motor fuels tax revenue and vehicle registration fees has been used to shore up the budgets of other agencies like the Department of Public Safety. This session, that practice ended — at least for the 2016-2017 biennium — when lawmakers appropriated an additional \$1.3 billion to the department.

During the session, lawmakers made several changes to laws that affect state workers.

For more information about those changes, visit the Crossroads home page and look for the story on new legislation. 


Earn Time Off with the Clean Air Plan

From May 1 to Sept. 30, TxDOT employees can do their part to clean the air and earn time off from work. The Clean Air Plan encourages people to log their activities, earn points and trade them in for two to eight hours of miscellaneous leave. Employees can take public transit, carpool, vanpool, ride a motorcycle, bike or walk to and from work to earn points.

The plan, which was started in 2002 as part of Drive Clean Across Texas, captures emission reductions at TxDOT due to individual employee choices and various other measures implemented by districts such as using TxLED fuel for fleet vehicles, says Clean Air Plan coordinator Tim Wood. Wood is an environmental air specialist for TxDOT.

In March 2002, TxDOT partnered with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to create the Drive Clean Across Texas campaign, the first state-sponsored public awareness program aimed at motivating individuals to change driving habits. The campaign asks the public to drive less, to maintain their vehicles so that they pollute less, to avoid unnecessary idling, to buy a vehicle that pollutes less, and to drive the speed limit.

In the plan, TxDOT employees can earn points in three categories: commuting measures, lunch activities and vehicle maintenance efforts. The commuting options earn three points, the most in the program; lunch earns one point and vehicle maintenance will get you two points. Contact your area's Clean Air Plan coordinator to learn more.

All leave granted must be used by Aug. 31, 2016. To register for the Clean Air Plan, visit the link on the Environmental Affairs Division's Crossroads page. 

New interstate on the block

I-69 Houston designation complete

TxDOT continues to advance the development and designation of the I-69 system in Texas with its latest interstate designation approval. On March 26, the Texas Transportation Commission designated U.S. 59 within Loop 610 in Houston as part of I-69, creating a continuous 75-mile section of the multi-state freeway that runs from the Rio Grande Valley to Michigan.

The segment that was designated is from the existing I-69 termini at I-610 North and I-610 West, a distance of 11.9 miles. This segment is also concurrently designated as U.S. 59. This action fills the gap and completes the designation of I-69 in the Houston area, which now reaches points north to the Montgomery/Liberty county line and south to Rosenberg in Fort Bend County.


The commission's approval is a culmination of significant analysis and coordination over a period of several months. The Transportation Planning and Programming Corridor Planning Branch and its consultant, Atkins Global, evaluated this 11.9-mile segment to determine if it met interstate standards. They worked with the Houston District, reviewed construction plans, analyzed safety



Driven by Texans

and other factors to determine if this segment could be designated as an interstate.

Coordination with the Texas Division of the Federal Highway Administration was critical to working through some of the concerns in this segment and the successful completion and submission of the interstate designation request. The Federal Highway Administration approved the segment on March 9. The interstate is expected to be a critical artery for moving agricultural, energy and industrial exports through the nation and beyond.

Highway signs reflecting the new interstate designation are expected to be installed this summer. With this designation, the Houston area represents almost half of the 153 miles of the I-69 system designated in Texas. 

Summer Brings Changes to Annual Enrollment

Anual Enrollment for TxDOT employees will be from Friday, July 10 to Friday, July 24. Annual enrollment is employees' opportunity to make changes to health, dental and other optional benefits for themselves and their families. A few changes will also go into effect for TxDOT benefits this year.

New administration and changes to TexFlex

Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) has contracted with ADP to administer the TexFlex Program. A TexFlex flexible spending account lets you set aside money from your paycheck, pre-tax, to use for eligible out-of-pocket health expenses.

ADP will provide more information about their administration of the program this summer. ADP will work with ERS to:

- Attend Summer Enrollment fairs from June 22 through July 31.
- Create a new TexFlex website, which will launch June 22.
- Provide a customer call center in June.

Qualified Transportation and Fringe Benefit Plan coming to TexFlex

The ERS Board approved a Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefits plan, also referred to as a Transit and Parking plan. Such a plan allows employees to participate in a pre-tax account to pay for qualified work-related commuting and parking expenses. Right now, ERS tentatively plans to launch the program in calendar year 2016. Additional information will be provided as it is available.


Health Care Account contribution increases

Health care accounts allow participants to pay for eligible medical, dental, vision, hearing and prescription drug expenses not covered by insurance. Currently, \$2,500 is the maximum annual contribution, but the IRS increased that limit to \$2,550 for Plan Year 2016 which runs from Sept. 1, 2015 to Aug. 31, 2016.

For information on benefits fairs in your area, watch for information from Human Resources or visit the ERS website.

If you have questions about Annual Enrollment contact your local Human Resources staff.

In other human resources-related news, the department is improving its efforts to ensure a safe work environment with changes to the Substance Abuse Program. Some highlights of the changes include renaming safety-sensitive employees to safety-impact employees, identifying safety-impact positions by job profile and expanding testing requirements.

Watch for more information coming soon. In the meantime, you can visit with your local Substance Control Officer if you have questions. 


HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE— BE PREPARED



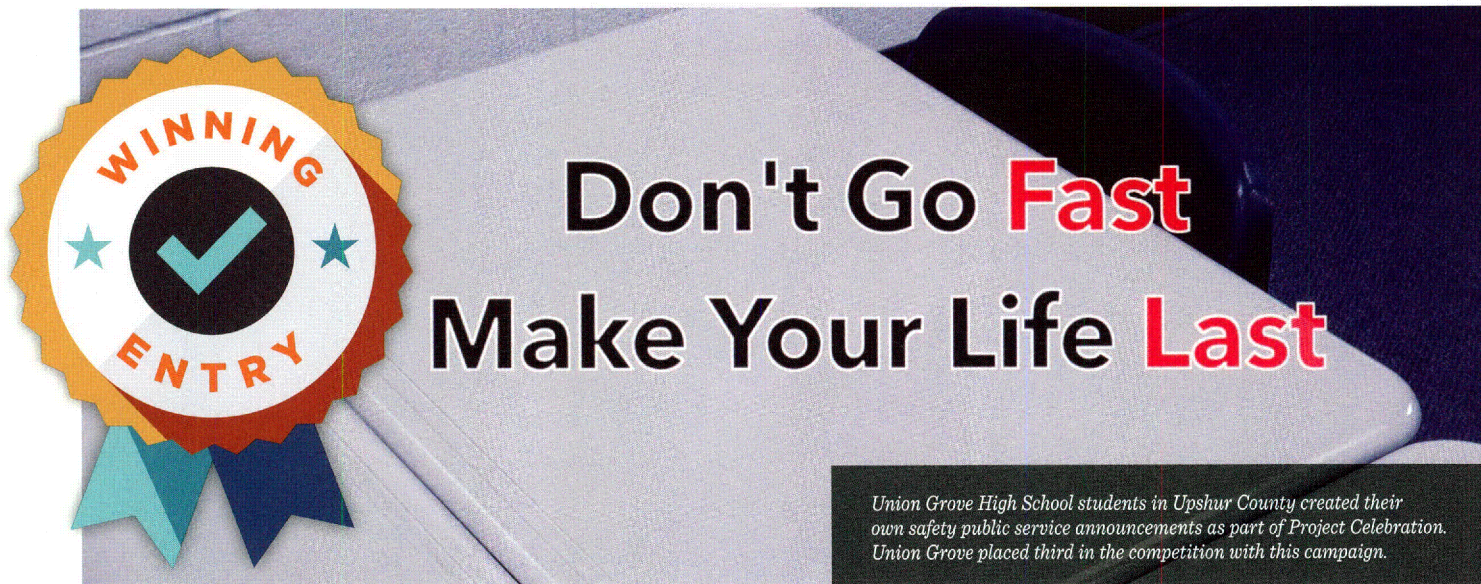
Hurricanes are among nature's most powerful and destructive phenomena and the time to prepare is now. If you live on the Texas coast, that's especially important. But even areas well away from the coastline can be threatened by destructive winds, tornadoes and flooding from these storms.

The 2015 Atlantic Hurricane season began June 1, and will end on Nov. 30. Although forecasters expect the number of named storms and hurricanes to stay below historical averages, they were watching the first signs of a possible storm in the Atlantic this spring. And that's reason enough to stay on guard.

History teaches us that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation can be disastrous. By knowing what actions you should take before a storm makes landfall, you can reduce the possibility of a hurricane disaster. The National Weather Service issues timely watches and warnings, but it's up to you to make sure your family is storm ready by preparing a family emergency plan and a disaster supply kit, including shelf-stable food, fresh water, batteries and a weather radio.

A special information webpage on txdot.gov (keyword: hurricane) has links to evacuation maps and contraflow videos. You can also keep up to date on the latest road conditions and evacuation information on our Twitter feed, @TxDOTAlert, which is available exclusively for emergency-related information. We've also updated and improved our highway condition website, drivetexas.org, to provide Texans with timely information about road conditions. 

Safety Videos Win Money for Students and Schools



High Schools in the Atlanta, Lufkin and Tyler districts were eligible to earn extra money for their Project Celebration events this year by producing traffic safety videos that target their peers.

Every year TxDOT distributes grant money to schools that conduct an overnight alcohol-free and drug-free event for their students following prom or high school graduation as part of Project Celebration. The schools are reimbursed for their event expenses, including door prizes for participants.

"Instead of just giving the money to the schools, last year I came up with a way that the students could learn about traffic safety while also educating their peers," said Irene Webster, traffic safety specialist for the Atlanta District. "We decided to hold a public service announcement contest where the students created their own videos on a number of traffic safety issues, like distracted driving, seatbelt usage, speeding and drinking and driving."

Winners received \$1,000 for first place, \$800 for second place and \$600 for third place. Any school that turned in a video for the competition received at least \$500. The videos were shown on the schools' Channel 1 stations and uploaded to YouTube.


This year, the first place winner was Redwater High School in Bowie County with a video on distracted driving.

This year, the Lufkin and Tyler districts held their own video competitions along with the Atlanta District. In addition, a regional safety coalition group called Pay Attention East Texas assisted by sponsoring their own competition featuring the top three winners from each of the districts. The coalition awarded an extra \$1,000 for first place, \$600 for second place and \$400 for third place.

This year, the first place winner was Redwater High School in Bowie County with a video on distracted driving. Second place went to Douglass High School in Nacogdoches County with a video on seatbelt usage and third place went to Union Grove High School in Upshur County with a video on speeding.

"It was surprising that the winners all came from smaller school districts and not the big high schools," Webster said. "Competition was tough all the way around. The scores for the winners of the coalition competition were separated by only one point."

Webster said she is also trying to get local television stations and theaters to show the videos as public service announcements.

Schools that chose not to participate in the video contest were also eligible to receive grant money for their Project Celebrations by sponsoring traffic safety events at their schools. 

Spartan Race spurs achievement

As part of a New Year's resolution, Julian Estrada, a training coordinator with TxDOT's Work Force Development, promised himself that he would complete the Austin Spartan Race, a nine-and-a-half-mile course with 28 obstacles.



Julian Estrada holds his t-shirt showing he finished the Spartan Race.




Julian Estrada (left) finished his first Spartan Race in May with his brother-in-law.

“My friends and I planned for four months to attend this event together to start the new year off right. Unfortunately, my brother-in-law and I were the only ones who followed through with the plan,” says Estrada. He initially started his training using TxDOT’s Wellness Program as a guide. Now knowing what the event entails, Estrada admits he should have trained more to prepare for the obstacles. The most difficult challenge was carrying a 40-pound sandbag while walking a half mile in a creek.

“At one point I said to myself, ‘I am paying money to do this?’” he said.

The average finish time is two and a half hours. Estrada took four because he and his brother-in-law aided other racers along the way. As grueling as the event was, Estrada is already signed up to do another Spartan Race in October in Dallas. He says people can skip the obstacles or challenge themselves to complete them.

“I encourage everybody to push themselves and attempt to be a Spartan for a day,” he said. 

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

Generation Tx: Lindsey Family Part of TxDOT Since 1939



DIGNITARIES AT DEDICATION CEREMONIES

In this 1968 newspaper clipping, New Boston Maintenance Supervisor Cater Lindsey (far right) participates in a ribbon cutting for the opening of the section's new maintenance building.



Four generations of the Lindsey family have worked for TxDOT. From left: Terry Lindsey III, Terry Lindsey II and Terry Lindsey Sr.

The Lindsey family ties to TxDOT date back almost to its inception. Four generations of the family have made a career with the agency, including two current employees.

The family's journey with the department started in 1939 when patriarch Cater Lindsey was hired as a maintenance technician in the New Boston section of the Atlanta District. He was promoted to supervisor in 1949 and retired in 1974 at age 62. Following in his footsteps were his son Terry Lindsey Sr., grandson Terry Lindsey II and great-grandson Terry Lindsey III.

In November 1960, Terry Lindsey Sr. was hired as a field surveyor in the Tyler District and two years later became an inspector. Although they worked in different districts, he said he's proud of the 14 years he and his father, Cater, shared at TxDOT.

"My dad thought, especially after retirement, that everybody should work for

the highway department," said Lindsey. "I wasn't that enthused and I didn't know that it's where I wanted to work. I couldn't work in District 19 (formally the Atlanta District) where we lived because he was the supervisor so I came to the Tyler District. We had a lot of work back then building interstates. We built I-20."

Seven years into his career, Lindsey Sr. was laid off but rehired a year later. He retired in 1992 at age 52. Though 21 years would pass before the younger Lindseys could sign-on, he's glad they finally got the opportunity to become part of the TxDOT family.

Terry Lindsey II, 50, an inspector at the Tyler Area Office, says the wait was rather excruciating since he knew by age 18 that he wanted to work for TxDOT. In January 2013, the husband and father of four got his wish.

"I just didn't know it was going to take 32 years and me being 48 before I got to work here," he said. "I always knew

this is what I was going to do. What else would I do? I love my job and I like coming to work. I haven't missed a day in my three years."

It took some convincing for Terry Lindsey III, 29, a mechanic in the Tyler District Shop since July 2014, to give the department a shot. The husband and father of two quit his law enforcement job as a sheriff's deputy and became an auto mechanic.

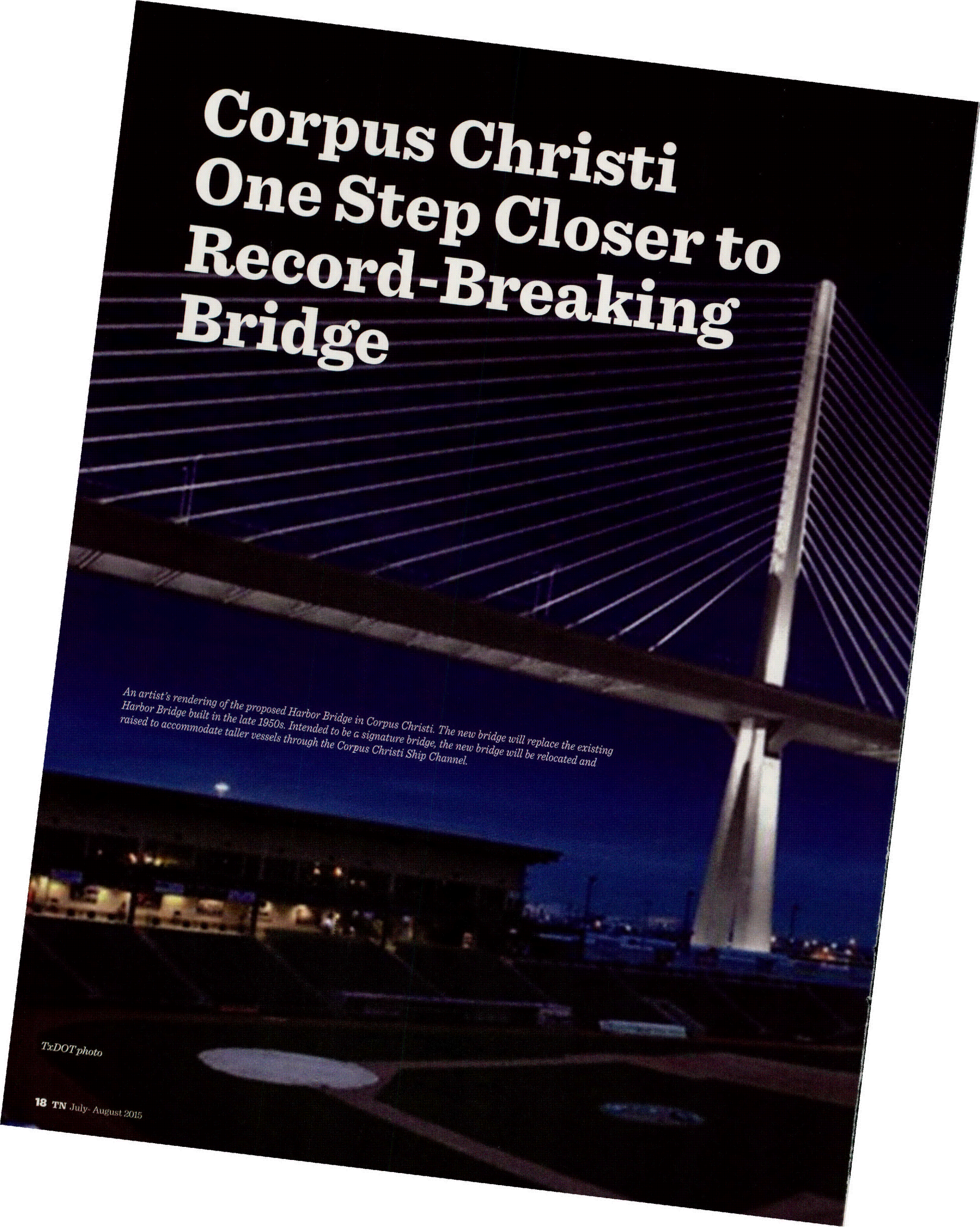
"All the while I was being harassed by my dad to apply at TxDOT," he said. "We got into some heated arguments about it. I was really afraid to come to work for a big agency because I didn't feel like I knew enough about it to work there."

"It took me about four days to figure out that it was a good job — a great job for a family man. I like fleet operations but I don't plan on being idle if opportunities arise."

All three Terrys now echo their patriarch's sentiment that "working for the highway department is the best job ever."

The two youngest Lindseys were looking forward to competing against each other in the District Rodeo Drive-Off in May, while Lindsey Sr., now 75, and wife Peggy, who reside in Tyler just three months a year, were loading up the RV for their annual summer stay in Colorado. **TN**

Corpus Christi One Step Closer to Record-Breaking Bridge



An artist's rendering of the proposed Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi. The new bridge will replace the existing Harbor Bridge built in the late 1950s. Intended to be a signature bridge, the new bridge will be relocated and raised to accommodate taller vessels through the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.

TxDOT photo

In April, Flatiron/Dracados JV was selected as the designer and builder for the new Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi. In the works for 14 years, the new bridge will replace the existing Harbor Bridge that connects Corpus Christi to nearby Portland across the Corpus Christi and Nueces bays. The bid includes a 25-year operations and maintenance contract.

The Texas Department of Transportation determined in 2003 that the existing mile-long bridge needed massive improvements to meet modern traffic standards and to curb mounting maintenance costs. Lane closures and delays were frequent due to crashes and other incidents. The solution was a new Harbor Bridge with a flatter bridge grade, new lighting and other safety enhancements.

“The Harbor Bridge Replacement Project signifies a dynamic new era for Corpus Christi, the Coastal Bend and all of Texas,” said Executive Director Joe Weber. “By replacing the existing span, which was built in the 1950s, this new bridge will make a positive contribution to commerce, public safety

and transportation for decades to come. We couldn’t have done it without the financial commitment and support of our local partners and state officials, so we thank them for making this a reality.”


The new design is a product of extensive community involvement. TxDOT held public meetings beginning in 2005 with a citizen advisory committee and a technical advisory committee and held many neighborhood meetings to get public input on the project. Workshops included discussions on livability for the neighborhoods, and a special history project gathered testimonials from residents to document the neighborhood history.

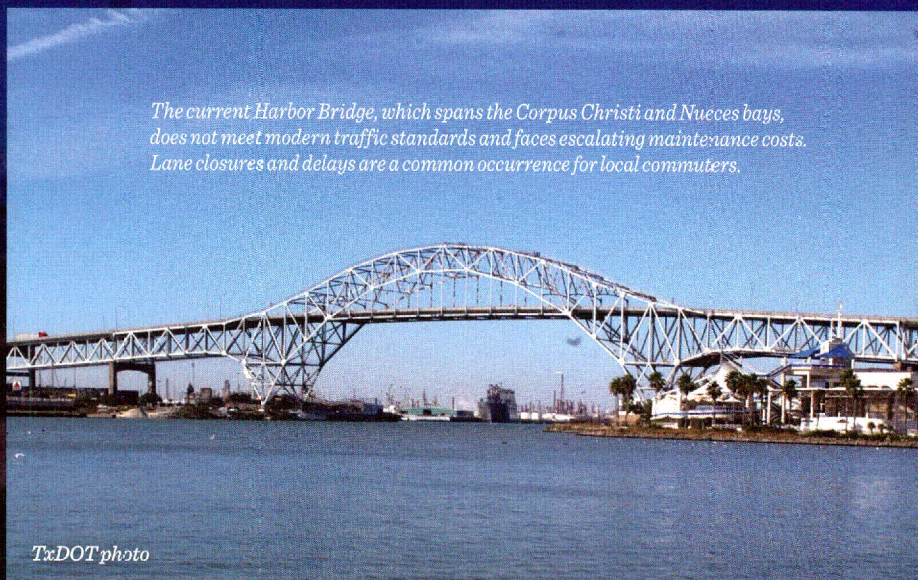
In addition, a blue ribbon panel of local leaders helped develop the aesthetic requirements for the design. The new bridge will have three travel lanes in each direction, full-width shoulders and a hike-and-bike path. The addition of shoulders on the bridge will enhance its designation as a hurricane evacuation route and improve safety by allowing stalled or crashed vehicles to be removed from travel lanes.

The bridge also will have a higher clearance at about 205 feet, which will

give the Port of Corpus Christi access to the largest ocean-going vessels, including ships traveling through the expanded Panama Canal. At 1,655 feet, the new bridge will be the longest main span cable-stayed bridge in the United States and the third longest in the world.

“As mayor of the city of Corpus Christi, I am pleased with the Texas Transportation Commission’s actions to bring what was once considered a pipe dream one step closer to reality,” said Corpus Christi Mayor Nelda Martinez. “In addition to addressing the safety issues, the new Harbor Bridge will be an economic game changer for the Coastal Bend region for generations to come. I am proud of the strong regional partnerships which contributed to the progress of our national bridge of significance.”

As the project continues, TxDOT remains committed to working with the community to make the new bridge a hallmark to be proud of for many years to come. Construction is expected to begin in late 2015 or early 2016 and should be completed in five years. 



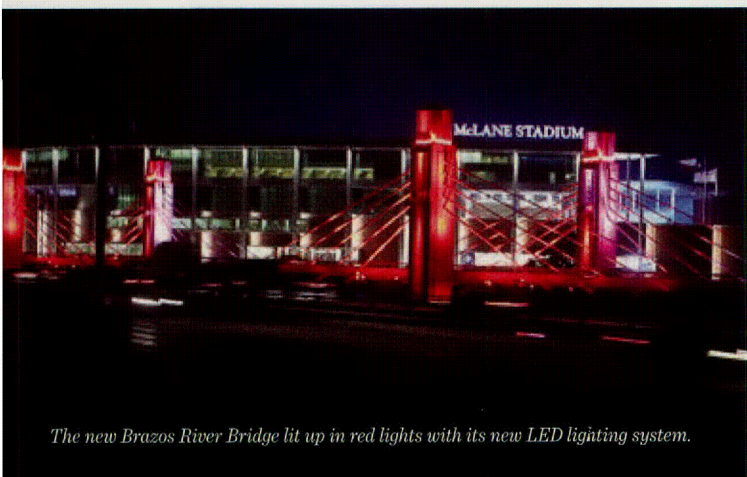
The current Harbor Bridge, which spans the Corpus Christi and Nueces bays, does not meet modern traffic standards and faces escalating maintenance costs. Lane closures and delays are a common occurrence for local commuters.

TxDOT photo

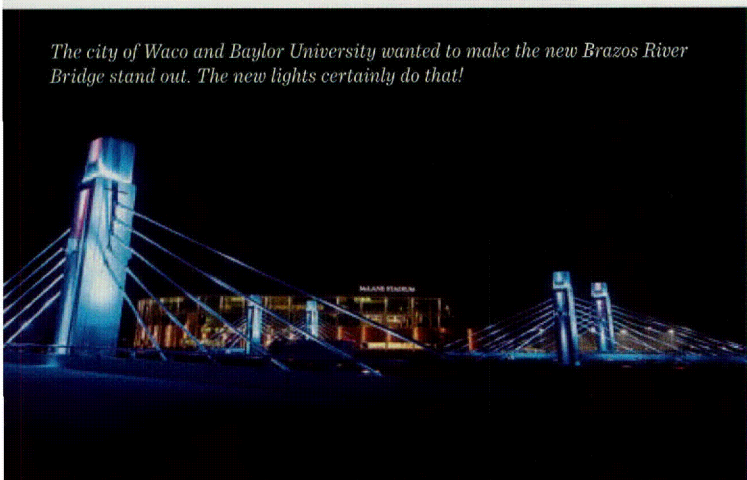


LED lighting makes Waco's signature bridge over the Brazos River eye-catching even at night. The lights can create an endless number of colors to commemorate special events. All photos courtesy of the Waco Tribune.

New Brazos River Bridge lights the way



The new Brazos River Bridge lit up in red lights with its new LED lighting system.



The city of Waco and Baylor University wanted to make the new Brazos River Bridge stand out. The new lights certainly do that!


Completed last summer, Waco's one-of-a-kind, eye-catching signature bridge over the Brazos River is about to become even more popular when it's lit up with an elaborate LED lighting system. In April, nighttime crews were fine-tuning the system as they performed numerous test-runs. The testing caught the attention of the media, motorists and residents who were treated to a sneak peek. Word of the lighted bridge spread quickly, leaving Central Texas abuzz with anticipation.

Plans to light the bridge were in place from the beginning, though a redesign temporarily halted the lighting project. Those witnessing the test runs say the wait was worth it.

"The color combinations are endless," says Brenton Lane, TxDOT's project manager for section 3-B of the I-35 Expansion Project. "The city of Waco and Baylor University wanted something that would really stand out. I have to say, this bridge is certainly something to be proud of."

The flexibility of the lighting system makes it ideal for commemorating events or celebrations like the Fourth of July or the holiday season.

The system includes 850 linear feet of strip lighting with 32 four-foot arm extensions sporting 200 light fixtures. The primary colors — red, green and blue, which are different than the red, yellow and blue primary colors of paint — are mixed in various levels to produce all the colors of the spectrum. However, each of the individual lights can be programmed separately to create a limitless number of colors by adjusting each light's intensity.

The current plan is to have the bridge lit just before sunset until daybreak, every day of the week. 

PEPS Lead Program

The Professional Engineering Procurement Services division's Leadership and Engineering Advancement program helps to shape future leaders at TxDOT. The program, which launched in 2013, recently enrolled its current class. Past participants say LEAD has led them to new career heights.

"As a participant of the 2013 program, I've met and worked with some of TxDOT's best leaders," said Raul Ortega, of the PEPS El Paso Service Center.

"Through the program, I was fortunate to be exposed to skillsets that I probably would not have come across elsewhere," said Ortega. "These skillsets have given me the confidence to effectively address my day-to-day challenges. Also, being part of a team-oriented structure has set the standard for me when it comes to being a future leader at TxDOT."

Ortega's rotational term ends in August 2015 and discussions are underway to identify the next step in his career back at the district.

LEAD 2013 included 14 participants, with four of those being rotational engineers.

Norma Glasscock, who rotated in from the Abilene District, was ready to learn it all.

"The program introduced me to the skills to make change positive and successful. Through feedback, dashboards and pulse checks, a leader will be able to measure the efforts that are successful, identify the factors that contribute to that success, and share the knowledge with those that implement the change," she said. "For me, it has been a career changer. I have gained confidence and self-esteem through the guidance


of coaches, mentors and peers. Fellow employees are ready to share experiences to strengthen a participant's leadership skills. It is a unique experience within TxDOT to prepare the leaders of the future."

Ortega says he would highly recommend the program to other employees.

"As a participant, you will be assigned a senior sponsor and a PEPS coach who will provide you with valuable feedback, which you can effectively apply to the rest of your career. The exposure to new skillsets and new work relationships is definitely worthwhile," said Ortega.

The program rotates four to five employees through the PEPS division for a two-year assignment.

To be considered for the program, candidates should receive an "exceeds" rating on their latest performance review. **During their time in the division, program participants will:**

- Learn skillsets such as leadership, change management, communications, and problem solving skills.
- Obtain exposure with the engineering consultant sector and master the art of negotiation, broadening their experience when they rotate back out.
- Grow business skills and capabilities related to financing, budgeting and cost management.
- Learn to coach and mentor the next generation of leaders, continuing the process and enhancing the program for developing employees.
- Be assigned a senior sponsor and mentor that makes staff development a priority by providing regular feedback and coaching. 



SCHOOL DAYS

TxDOT photo



TxDOT Executive Director Joe Weber answers questions from Barton Creek Elementary School students Dillon Aitala (far left) and Gregory Kanipp.

This spring, students from the Barton Creek Elementary School in southwest Austin wrote to TxDOT administrators to express their concerns about traffic in Austin. Executive Director Joe Weber wanted to respond to the students personally and invited them to his office to discuss their letters.

"You raised some good points and I think it's important to answer your questions face to face," said Weber to the students.

The students wrote about the congestion on Austin highways, the city's population growth, car crashes, texting and driving, and the safety of road construction workers.

The executive director met with Dillon Aitala and Gregory Kanipp to discuss their concerns and provide them with more information about TxDOT. Aitala's mother, Sara Beechner, and Kanipp's mother, Wanda Molinary, accompanied the students on their visit.


"One of TxDOT's goals is to maintain a safe system. We have programs like Click It or Ticket and Talk. Text. Crash. to help educate people to be safer drivers. Safe driving protects our construction zone workers as well," said Weber.

Speaking to the students' concerns about congestion in Austin, Weber explained that it's a complicated issue that can't be solved completely without taking a broader view toward transportation as a system, not just roads and bridges.

"The problem may seem local but it's affected by things happening around the state. We can't build our way out of our transportation concerns," he said. "We have to think our way out, too, by looking at new technology and alternative ways and times we travel to and from work."

Dillon asked Weber what had helped him be successful.

"I think the key to success is to surround yourself with good people who help you balance your areas in strengths and weaknesses," he said. "That's really what's most important. Where you are weak, surround yourself with people who are strong and empower them."

Weber presented Dillon and Gregory with a TxDOT coin in appreciation of their civic interest in improving their community. 

Ball of Trash

Rolls Out Anti-Litter Campaign

TxDOT photo



TxDOT kicked off its new anti-littering campaign at the State Capitol with a giant ball of trash. The new "Don't mess with Texas" ads feature TxDOT Executive Director Joe Weber and the sounds of Willie Nelson.

Showing how even the smallest trash can add up to a very big mess, the Texas Department of Transportation hosted an event in April on the Capitol lawn to launch several new public service announcements as part of its iconic "Don't mess with Texas" anti-litter campaign.

The first announcement features Executive Director Joe Weber urging Texans to keep our highways litter free.


"As a proud Texan, I wanted to be out there letting people know that I don't take kindly to people trashing my great state," said Weber. "The amount of roadway litter we're picking up comes at a great cost to Texans and it's simply unacceptable. If everyone who travels our roadways did the right thing by throwing litter in trash cans instead of tossing it out their windows, we could save millions of dollars that could be channeled to other important needs."

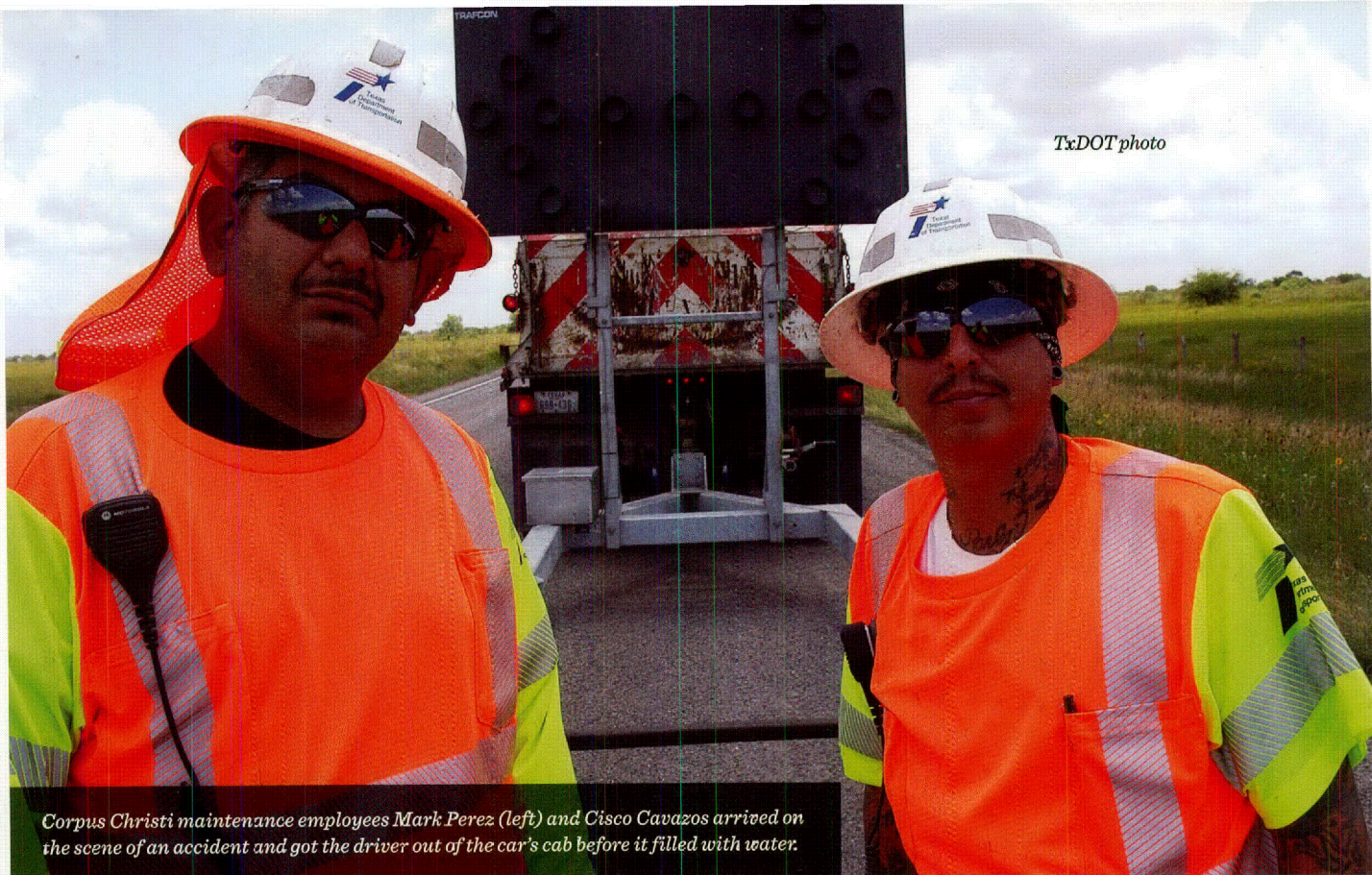
"The 'Don't mess with Texas' campaign plays an important role in our state by reminding everyone that it takes all Texans to prevent litter along our roadsides," added Texas Transportation Commissioner Jeff Austin III.

"Our state is known for its wide-open spaces and beautiful landscapes, and we don't want that marred by trash. Let's all do our part to keep Texas not only a great place to work, but a great place to live."

The campaign includes new television and digital spots that show a small ball of trash tossed from a pickup truck that grows into a huge, menacing sphere that rumbles onto the Capitol lawn. The new spots are available in English and Spanish and feature the voices of Willie Nelson and Sunny Saucedo. A celebrity selfie campaign launched as well.

Nearly a half-billion pieces of visible litter pile up along state-maintained highways each year, costing taxpayers \$35 million to clean up. Small trash, including napkins, fast-food wrappers and cigarette butts, make up 70 percent of the litter found along Texas roads.

With the state's population rapidly growing, the "Don't mess with Texas" campaign reminds new and long-time Texans that littering not only is unsightly, but also is unlawful. Fines for littering range from \$500 to \$2,000. 



Corpus Christi maintenance employees Mark Perez (left) and Cisco Cavazos arrived on the scene of an accident and got the driver out of the car's cab before it filled with water.

Rapid Response

TxDOT workers rescue man from flooded vehicle

With the work day winding down, General Transportation Technicians Francisco "Cisco" Cavazos and Mark Perez of the Corpus Christi District were headed back to the yard when they came upon the scene of a car crash late in the afternoon of April 22.

A Goliad County man had lost control of his vehicle in heavy rainfall about 2 miles west of Goliad on SH 239. The car had rolled and come to rest upside down in a roadside ditch. Both the ditch and the car were filling rapidly with water.

Perez dropped off Cavazos at the scene while he parked their 10-yard dump truck. The TxDOT employees quickly determined that a person was trapped in the overturned vehicle, a fact confirmed by bystanders.

But no one was taking action and 911 had not been called.

Noticing the water rising in the car, Cavazos grabbed a hammer from a bystander, told the trapped man to cover his face and broke the rear window on the driver's side. Perez called 911.


After climbing into the car to free the driver, Cavazos discovered the seatbelt would not release. The man had managed to twist in his seat so that his feet were on the floorboard and his back was arched to keep his head above water, which had risen to the driver's neck.

Cavazos then backed out of the vehicle, found a knife and went back in, diving under the water to cut the man out of the seatbelt. Perez assisted in removing the driver and Cavazos before the cab of the vehicle filled up with water.

When they arrived on the scene, Cavazos said, "Our main concern was pulling him out and getting him safe."

After the rescue, Cavazos said, "My adrenaline was pumping and pumping. I couldn't have gotten him out without Mark's help. We just reacted to get him out of that car. We weren't looking to be heroes. We just did what we had to do."

Emergency medical services arrived at the scene and treated the driver. Perez has known the driver since Perez was a child.

"He says we saved his life. He expresses his gratitude every time I see him around town," Perez said. 

I am a...

Transportation Specialist

After working for TxDOT for two summers during high school, Wichita Falls native Matt Smith joined the department full time in 1984. Smith, a transportation specialist for the Wichita Falls District, has a 21-year-old son, Mason, and a 13-year-old daughter, Madison. In his off time, Smith travels to see Mason race International Motor Contest Association Southern Sportmod dirt cars in and around North Texas and Southern Oklahoma, or watches Madison play softball and cheerlead for her school.

“As far back as I can remember, TxDOT has been a part of my family,” Smith says. His dad, Virgil Smith, served as shop foreman for the Wichita Falls District. The elder Smith worked for TxDOT for 37 years before retiring.

Every August, the Hotter’N Hell Hundred bicycle ride comes to Wichita Falls. Matt has been the liaison for the district for 15 years.

“I have had the pleasure of meeting many people from around the world.”

What brought you to TxDOT?

My dad convinced me to apply for a striping job in 1984 when I graduated from high school. I was hired to drive the district’s striper. I drove the striper for three years before becoming crew leader and operating the spray equipment for the striping operations. Since that time I have worked with Striping Coordinator Randy Shelton doing striping operations, all types of pavement markings and contract inspections. Randy and I have worked together for 27 years and about 20 of those years were on the striping truck. He drove and I operated the spray equipment.

Describe your typical day as a striper. What does striping a road involve?

In the last couple of years, my duties have revolved more around scheduling district striping operations, managing contract inspections and assisting the

maintenance sections with traffic-related questions. I develop restriping projects on a yearly basis as well as the on-call striping contract for the district. I am developing the 2016 restriping contract for the district. There is a lot of planning and scheduling of daily striping operations. We coordinate with maintenance sections to secure the appropriate assistance and traffic control.

Striping a road or highway is so much more dangerous than it was when I started. Speed limits have increased, cellphone use has increased and distracted driving is on the rise! Everyone is in a hurry to get somewhere. Safety is the top priority for our daily activities.

What is the most challenging part of your job and how do you work through it?

During striping operations there has to be good communication between the driver and the operator. Operations may continue for mile after mile after mile. The driver must focus on keeping the stripe as straight as possible while informing the operator of upcoming changes to the stripe or patterns. The spray equipment operator develops an eye for how the stripe needs to look. Does it have enough reflective glass beads to make it shine at night? Is the stripe wide enough and thick enough? It can be very mentally stressful.

What is the best part of working for TxDOT and the Wichita Falls District?

We depend so much on the employees around us to provide traffic control. When you are concentrating on placing a nice, straight stripe, you depend upon your fellow employees to keep you safe and to notify you if there are unsafe conditions around you.

I enjoy the days when I get out with the crew and work. I have met so many people around the state over the last 30 years. Some have become close friends of mine and my family.




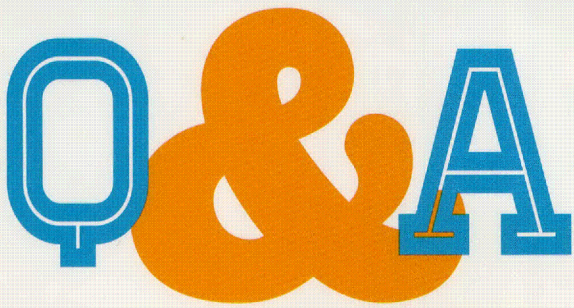
Randy Shelton

Matt Smith

Matt Smith with his long-time co-worker and fellow crash test dummy, Randy Shelton.

You also play one of the crash test dummies for community events. Tell us more about that.

The Traffic Safety Office in Wichita Falls does seatbelt safety presentations throughout the year. Someone suggested that the crash test dummies (Vince and Larry) be added to that presentation. I volunteered to play one and Randy Shelton volunteered to play the other. The first show we did was for elementary students and the kids loved it. It was really fun to watch the faces of those kids. We have played the crash test dummies all around the Wichita Falls District. 



Robert Henry

Robert Henry

Assistant Maintenance Supervisor for Montgomery County, Houston District

Robert Henry has worked for TxDOT since graduating from high school. He first started with the East Harris Maintenance Office, before he transferred to the Montgomery Maintenance Office and worked his way up to assistant maintenance supervisor in the Houston District. He has lived in Porter, Texas all his life and is married to his best friend and high school sweetheart, Edna. They have been married for eight years and have a dog named Pina.

Why did you go to work for TxDOT?

I have always looked up to my dad who also worked for the North Harris Maintenance Office. He retired from there with 33 years of service. When growing up I said I wanted to be just like him, so I took it literally and went to work for TxDOT. Plus, you get to operate equipment that you wouldn't run anywhere else.

What are your job duties as an assistant maintenance supervisor?

I make sure that the work schedule is made out daily. I'm responsible for the safety of the employees, schedule equipment repairs and make sure that deficiencies are taken care of. I also coordinate work with contractors and other sections with special projects in our area.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Well, coming from a background of running heavy equipment — Gradall especially — sitting behind a desk is hard now. I try to get out there and run some equipment, but then people remind me that I have paperwork to do.

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

I work as a safety tech for Monster Jam, a sporting event that features monster trucks, and I get to travel a lot. I have traveled to three countries and fifteen different states. I get to see and work with different people all over the world, in places such as Australia, Costa Rica and Mexico. The best part is that we get time to sightsee while we are there.

What hobbies do you enjoy?

I like to go camping with family and friends at various parks because it's relaxing. I assist with a lawn service that my father operates because it gives me time to get away and think. I also love to tinker with things and take them apart to see how they work. This sometimes upsets my wife because things usually are not broken until I get ahold of them!

What major life events have had the greatest impact on you?

Learning that I had dyslexia at a young age was traumatic. People would count me out, telling me I wouldn't make it. All I have to say to them is, "Look at me now!"

Why is your district the best in TxDOT?

The Houston District is the best because we all communicate effectively. We also have the opportunity to create solutions to our problems and develop innovative equipment for our needs. Everybody is willing to help.



TxDOT photo


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

In our morning meetings, we get the employees involved with safety topics followed by tailgate meetings on the job. In addition, we have a lead worker in the crew ensuring that safety is number one. We all have someone or something to go home to.

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

I'm not afraid of heights but I will not ride roller coasters — even the kiddie ones.

How do you go above and beyond for TxDOT?

I like to give the employees every tool necessary for the job, even if that means making it. The Montgomery Maintenance Office has developed many tools such as our Mobile Work Platform on the back of our set-up truck. This unit places traffic control devices off a truck lift gate while moving through work zones. 

TxDOT Fleet Operations Manager Ricky Nieman (center) receives the 2015 Fleet Excellence Award from Dorothy Jakovina and Michael Power with the National Association of Fleet Administrators.


TxDOT photo



Fleet Operations Manager Recognized for Excellence

Fleet Operations Manager Ricky Nieman recently was awarded the 2015 Fleet Excellence Award in Outstanding Achievement in Public Fleet Management by the National Association of Fleet Administrators.

He was selected for this national honor based on his leadership in supporting major fleet improvements at the field level, including programs in efficiency, training and shop management. He was also instrumental in incorporating the Fleet Navigator fleet management system into shop operations when the program was rolled out in 2014.

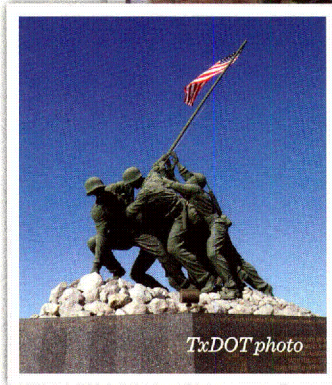
“This award is not just a personal recognition for Ricky, but it is an honor for our entire team,” said Fleet Operations Division Director Dalton Pratt. “These awards are presented to individuals, but the recognition would not have been possible without the hard work of the whole division.” 

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 July 24.



TxDOT photo




TxDOT photo

Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier, Joseph Greive (BRY). Last edition's photo featured the original mold for the Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C. The mold is on the grounds of the Marine Military Academy, a private college preparatory academy in Harlingen.

The Marine Corps War Memorial, sculpted by Felix de Weldon, recreates the historic photograph taken by Joe Rosenthal on Feb. 23, 1945. It depicts five Marines and a Navy corpsman raising a U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. The memorial was dedicated in 1954 to all Marines who died for their country.

Others correctly identifying the photo were Tracy Sult (TRV), Bill Baker (HOU), Walter Barfield (AUS) (who told us his father saw the actual event in World War II), Ernesto Alvarado (PHR), Joseph Hagler (LFK), Chris Cowen (BRY), Lyn Irby (TRV), Todd Bridegam (FTW), David Ham (SSD), T.P. Holt (WAC), Stephanie Cribbs (MRD), Bradley Peikert (BRY), Danny Williams (BWD), Albert Garza (TRV), Charles Boisseau (CMD), Tom Williams (BRY), Joe Lopez (retired), John Poskey (FTW), Stephen Spies (FOD) and Marylou Castillo (FIN). 

UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

July 29

Texas Transportation Commission Workshop
(Austin)

July 30

Texas Transportation Commission Meeting
(Austin)

Aug. 27

LBJ's Birthday
(Skeleton Crew)

Aug. 27

Texas Transportation Commission Meeting
(Austin)

MILESTONES

May 2015 Service Awards



DISTRICTS

Abilene

- 15** Chad W. Teichelman
Daniel P. Crow

Amarillo

- 25** Ronald L. Johnston
15 William G. McMurry
5 Leslie R. Simpson
Robert S. Mays
David J. Garcia
Russell W. Wilson
Dustin L. Lee

Atlanta

- 30** Thomas K. Young
20 John E. Hines
15 Glenn R. Yowell
10 Jace D. Cooper
Brandon K. Morse
Jason M. Griggs
5 William K. Hays
Danny M. Duncan

Austin

- 35** Ricky L. Wilson
10 Malcom A. Oldaker
Fred B. Wilson
Robert P. Wheeler
Bonnie J. Lister
Sean Wright

Beaumont

- 30** Henry E. Sawyer Jr.
25 Michael D. Skiles
15 Jamie L. Caviano
Joel M. Laningham
Ramoncito A. Belan
10 Carla Y. Gouaux
Donald O. Choate
James H. Omstead

Bryan

- 15** Trent A. Dierking
Christopher M. Cowen

Childress

- 10** Kenneth E. Benton

Corpus Christi

- 30** Michael Esparza
Arturo Morin
15 Deborah A. Shults
Woodren Pettis
10 Aaron A. Arroyo
5 Nicholas K. Novosad
Christopher D. Amy
Mark S. Hughes

Dallas

- 30** James M. Dobbins
Leann H. Kemp

- 25** Hal T. Stanford
Wilfred D. Chabot

- 20** Susan A. Icke
15 Joshua C. Vasquez
James P. Rivera
Rebecca D. Nance

- 10** Michael C. Thomas
Denise M. Boyd
Anthony R. Block
Kristian D. Skellen

El Paso

- 30** Antonio Cereceres
20 Jesus E. Valtier
15 Albert Bautista
Javier Castillo

Fort Worth

- 15** Javier Salinas
David D. Fowler
10 Franklin L. Haynes Jr.
Federico M. Hernandez
5 Jesus O. Castor III

Houston

- 30** Terrance R. Vogt
Jeanne M. Hayward
John D. Horelica
Steven M. Bayne
25 Alan Craf III
20 Marco A. Cantu
Laszlo Pato
15 Gehrig G. Boone
Clinton R. Mighty
Yee Cheng Chang
10 James R. Anderson Jr.
David K. Earnest
Jeffrey S. Pilgrim
Frederick S. Sunderman

Laredo

- 10** Maximiliano Torres
Omar J. Costilla

Lubbock

- 25** Russell N. Hayes
15 Donald E. Sewell
Manuel Perez
Agustin Chavarria
10 Martin Garza Jr.
Raymond Gutierrez
Zane R. Alexander
Detrand D. Cooper
George J. Villarreal

Lufkin

- 25** Kevin L. Harbuck
10 Terry P. King
Druey C. Stanley

Odessa

- 30** Guadalupe A. Rede
15 Gabriel A. Ramirez
Michael P. Stroope

- 10** Sammy Hinojos
Traci L. Ray

Paris

- 15** Sam J. Mims
William F. Tubb
Chad C. Ingram

Pharr

- 15** Sergio Sustaita
Eduardo Saenz
10 Jennifer L. Beltran

San Antonio

- 30** Cary C. Lloyd
15 Malcolm Gonzalez
Sanjay G. Upadhyay
William J. Trefzer
10 Robert P. Hicks
William W. Gooch
5 Keith T. Ploog
Bobby G. Gonzales

Waco

- 30** Kevin L. Pederson
15 Guy D. Grant II
David C. Mahoney

Wichita Falls

- 15** Darin W. Reed
Casey L. Elliott
Don S. Richardson
John B. Coats

Yoakum

- 15** David B. Stephens
10 John E. Picha

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

Administration

- 30** John A. Barton

Audit

- 25** David C. Kossa

Aviation

- 5** Paul V. Slusser Jr.

Communications

- 5** Jo D. Wheatley
Andre P. Clemons

Construction

- 10** Brad A. Willemin

Enterprise System Office

- 15** Faisal G. Abdel-Qader

Finance

- 30** Gail A. Quimby
15 Deborah J. Vinson
10 Lisa K. Auston
5 Durando A. Snider

Fleet Operations

- 30** Samuel R. Salmon
20 Wayne S. Heikkila
10 Mark A. Hanslik
Paul M. Harvey Jr.

Human Resources

- 15** Patricia Thomas
Tammy R. Oliver

Innovative Financing /Debt and Portfolio Management

- 5** Sara M. Ulbrich

IT Operations

- 15** Kevin J. Setoda

Office of Civil Rights

- 10** Michael J. McElroy

Procurement

- 30** Tammy L. Oshel
Richard F. Wasson
25 Thomas J. Edmiston
Melissa A. Zunker
15 Brandy L. Halk
Sergio E. McGregor

Professional Procurement

- 15** Rakhshanda Mahar

Research and Technology

- 15** Edward N. Mattila

Right of Way

- 25** Gregory F. White
10 Twyla M. Hardin

Strategic Projects

- 10** Elizabeth A.
Halliburton-Riddick

Support Services

- 10** Alvaro Venegas

Toll Operations

- 10** Loretta B. Brown

Traffic Operations

- 30** Margaret A. Moore
Charlie B. Wicker
15 Latisha D. Beaver
10 Michael A. Olivo
Lawrence A. Krantz

Transportation Planning and Programming

- 30** Jeffery A. Wilhelm
25 Gregory O. Lancaster

Travel

- 25** Christine T. Anderson
20 Douglas L. Martin

June 2015 Service Awards



DISTRICTS

Abilene

- 20 Joey M. Walker
Robert L. White
- 15 Larry D. Sneed
Roy A. Sunday Jr.
Gary E. Shelnett
Ted F. Wende
- 10 Cassie L. Caudill

Amarillo

- 20 Frank Figueroa
- 10 John M. McVey
- 5 Robert A. Reining

Atlanta

- 15 Kami L. Parr
Jamie E. Barnes
- 5 Cleon D. Williams Sr.
Adrian Q. Allen Jr.

Austin

- 30 Richard D. Hull
- 25 James E. Schneider
- 15 Ronald E. Crawford
Michelle L.
Romage-Chambers
Kyle L. McCoy
Gary J. Hilgenberg
Dwayne M. Halbardier
- 10 Jason Rodriguez
Jonnie R. Perrine
Kevin A. Plumlee
James O. Felan
Michael Milford

Beaumont

- 30 Phillip Lujan
- 15 Peter P. Romano
Clifton C. Louviere Jr.
- 10 Cynthia L. Dougherty
Robert A. Webb
- 5 Travis R. Cox
Patrick L. Murray

Brownwood

- 20 Pless E. Stuessy

Bryan

- 15 Jennifer M. Mascheck
- 10 Dwight E. Moses
Billy J. Winchester
Roy J. Mathis
James E. Mason
- 5 Joshua B. Daskocil
Justin W. Kalisek

Childress

- 10 Bryan C. McClendon

Corpus Christi

- 30 George V. Cavazos
John R. Kelly
- 25 Thomas W. Redding Jr.
- 15 David G. Livas
- 10 Amanda M. Jonas

Dallas

- 30 John A. Babovec
Milton T. Marr
- 25 Christopher E. Gregory
James R. Brummett
Alan S. Radaydeh
- 20 Dion O. Porath
- 15 Kent E. Rivers
Maher Karam
- 10 Andy S. Byrd
James E. Evans
Ray A. Massey
- 5 Michael G. Shannon

El Paso

- 30 Hector Chanez Jr.

Fort Worth

- 25 James R. Goolsby Jr.
- 10 Chukwuma Osemeke
David C. Nwabuisi
- 5 Robert R. Porter

Houston

- 35 Mark D. Montgomery
- 30 Sharmarion E. Brown
- 25 Martin L. Seets
Thanh Binh T. Doan
- 20 Gary L. Kimmy
- 15 Ching H. Chiu
Lewis L. Walden
Socrates B. De Los Santos
Jaime E. Castaneda Jr.
Hugo A. Alvarado
Kimberly A. Straughter
- 10 Dustin A. Armstrong
Joyce A. Girouard
Todd S. Traylor
Azadeh Tejareh
Luwettica Richardson
James Villagomez
Kimlinh V. Nguyen
Lucas C. Stringfellow
Richard Lopez

Laredo

- 20 Elsa I. Gonzalez
- 15 Danny Magee
- 10 Raul Rodriguez

Lubbock

- 25 Brian K. Pope
- 10 Mark L. Alldredge
- 5 Michael S. Lopez
Andres Lopez

Lufkin

- 35 Donald R. McBride
- 25 Juan R. Molina
Travis D. Rogers
- 5 Justin L. Harrison
Chancey Cleaver
Charles M. Brazil

Paris

- 10 Michael L. Morgan
Joshua W. Golleher

Pharr

- 30 Robert W. Delafuente
- 15 Arturo Lopez
- 10 Orlando R. Cantu
Griselda Saldivar

San Angelo

- 25 William R. Galbreath
- 15 Bobby G. Pearson
Edwin S. Kloboucnik
- 10 Jerry D. Stone

San Antonio

- 35 Ernest L. Edgehouse Jr.
- 15 Jose L. Aguilar
- 10 Armando Garcia
Rebecca L. Penshorn
James B. Mason

Tyler

- 25 Willie G. Akin Jr.
- 15 Eric W. Hooks

Waco

- 15 Sharon L. Benson
- 10 Justin M. Brenek
Charles W. Smith
- 5 Michael L. Moran
Chance R. Ling

Wichita Falls

- 15 Ronnie L. Wilson
- 10 Cole D. Alexander
Martha A. Gill

Yoakum

- 20 Paul E. Reitz
- 15 Brandon J. Filla

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

Audit

- 10 Milan D. Hawkins

Construction

- 35 Jay D. Tarwater
- 20 Joseph P. Leidy
- 10 Jesus Valdez

Finance

- 25 Elsa O'Connor
- 20 Marylou Castillo
Sherry D. Phelps
- 10 Linda K. Oakes

Fleet

- 35 Oscar G. Carrasco
- 15 Robert S. Garza
J. Inez Hernandez
- 10 Russell R. Newton

Human Resources

- 20 Diana L. Jordan
- 15 Vanette M. Kuykendall

IT Operations

- 15 Hanh M. Le

Maintenance

- 15 Shawn D. Fox

Occupational Safety

- 10 Lucille Caraway

Procurement

- 25 William M. Bradshaw
- 15 Cynthia K. Goodson
- 5 Herbert Miller Jr.

Professional Procurement

- 10 Jaime A. Vela Jr.

Public Transportation

- 10 Eric Gleason

Right of Way

- 10 Carolyn A. Toliver

Support Services

- 15 Larry W. Seiler
Kyle M. Josey
Jessie L. Dycus

- 10 Javen L. Abraham

Travel

- 5 Monica Y. Freeman

March 2015 Retiree Report



DISTRICTS

Amarillo

25 Rory Gomez

Austin

31 Christopher Chidester

Corpus Christi

29 William Reitmann

Dallas

23 Edward Wetzel

10 Thomas Vaughn

El Paso

25 Tomas Saenz

Fort Worth

31 Cathy Wood

23 Charles Rose

18 Joni Eastman

Houston

33 Bradley Eubank

30 Mark Rodriguez

28 Joseph Waring

25 Eduardo Davis

Lubbock

23 Carl Smiley

Paris

17 Micheal Faulks

San Antonio

30 Paul Kieke

Waco

28 Rodney Karasek

Yoakum

32 Paul Frerich

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

Design

32 Keith Layton

Environmental Affairs

10 Sharon Dornheim

Fleet Operations

25 Randy Bounds

IT Operations

28 Darrel L. Zercher

Professional Procurement

31 Michael J. Offield

Right of Way

20 Vivian Bagwell

April 2015 Retiree Report



DISTRICTS

Amarillo

17 David Swaringen

Atlanta

34 Don Watson

29 Leslie Davidson

Beaumont

26 Robert Cagle

Bryan

28 Keith E. Zwernemann

Dallas

21 Christina M. Brookhart

17 Richard D. Rains

23 Patrick A. Walker

El Paso

22 Martin Holguin

Fort Worth

27 Kenneth R. Long

28 Justin L. McKinley

27 David E. Wagner

Houston

21 James A. Carter Jr.

15 Hoda Y. Rizkalla

29 Emma T. Mendoza

30 Lavada H. Murphy

Lubbock

28 Juan L. Bursiaga

San Antonio

9 Joseph A. Tijerina

Waco

19 Terry L. Fontana

Wichita Falls

19 Stephen W. McCullough

Yoakum

27 Donald W. Petru

33 Wesley A. Abraham

DIVISIONS/ OFFICES

Bridge

27 Rodney D. Stabeno

Communications

24 Lora D. Bettencourt

Environmental Affairs

12 Margaret M. Canty

Enterprise Systems

23 Judy Castillo

Fleet

27 Ralph Aleman

Information Technology

21 Sandra J. Kissman

Right of Way

9 Edgar R. Dimacali

19 Robin Kimberly
Nicholes

Support Services

26 Randall Sakai

In Memoriam

ACTIVE EMPLOYEES

Houston District

David J. Houston

Engineering Technician

Years of Service: 18 yrs

DOD: 5/7/15

Human Resources

Mary "Susie" S. Abright

Systems Analyst IV

Years of Service: 25 yrs

DOD: 4/10/15

RETIREES

Beaumont District

Paul Broussard Sr.

Years of Service: 21 yrs

DOD: 10/26/14

Lubbock District

Roy W. Jolly

Years of Service: 37 yrs

DOD: 1/12/15

Human Resources

Thelma "Louise" S. Dye

DOD: 9/1/14

Transportation Planning and Programming

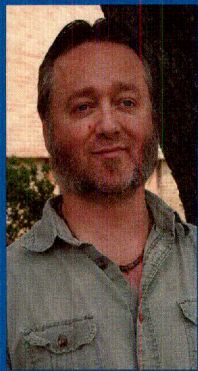
Phillip L. Wilson, P.E.

Years of Service: 30 yrs

DOD: 6/26/14

TxDOT Family Members Chime In

With summer winding down but the weather still warm, are you planning any camping trips in Texas? Where?

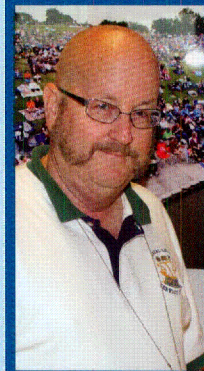


David Brink

PERMIT COORDINATOR
CORPUS CHRISTI
DISTRICT

"As the weather cools off each year, I do typically plan camping trips. Favorite spots in Texas include Big Bend, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Inks Lake and Lost Maples."

TxDOT photo

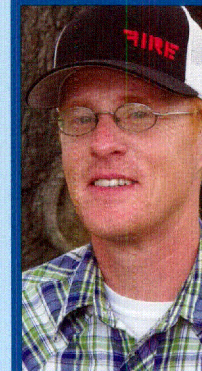


C.A. Cash

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
TO DISTRICT ENGINEER
BRYAN DISTRICT

"My wife and I plan to camp this fall or late summer. Our favorite spot is the Oxford Ranch Campground in Llano."

TxDOT photo



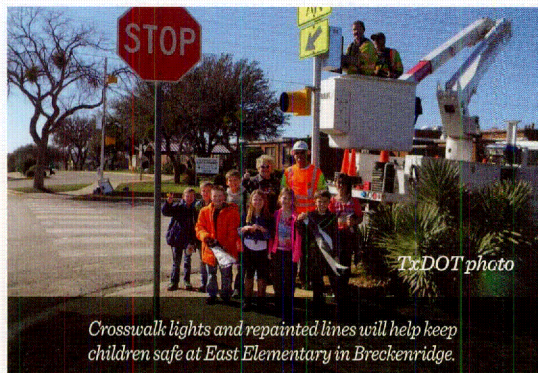
Matthew Heinze

SPECIAL CREWS
AUSTIN DISTRICT

"Yes, I plan to go camping. We like Inks Lake State Park and a lot of others!"

TxDOT photo

Bright Lights: TxDOT Efforts Get Noticed in Communities



TxDOT photo

Crosswalk lights and repainted lines will help keep children safe at East Elementary in Breckenridge.



TxDOT photo

TxDOT crews clear large trees from the roads in Comanche County following a severe winter storm.

TxDOT workers have been going the extra mile and getting noticed for it. Here are just a few examples of how they've helped their communities.

Keeping kids safe in Breckenridge

The Brownwood District recently worked with East Elementary in Breckenridge and the Breckenridge Police Department to help make the school's young students more visible to motorists driving in the area.

Daycare personnel were making several trips a day across a busy road to bring students to and from the school. East Elementary Principal Karen Lawson and Krystal Hash of Ms. Jessica's Child Development Center worried that drivers wouldn't see the groups crossing the road until it was too late.

Lawson and local law enforcement reached out to the Stephens County Maintenance Section for help. With brainstorming and some trial and error, they found a solution.

Their idea: add new crosswalk lights and repaint the crosswalk lines. Traffic Systems Specialist **Doug Finnigan** built the light for the new crosswalk and oversaw the installation.

The project was completed in late March and has garnered lots of attention from the community.

"With the help of Principal Lawson and our local TxDOT, we now have a working crosswalk light to help drivers know there are precious little ones crossing the street," said Hash. "Thank you to everyone who worked so diligently to keep our children a number one priority."

Facebook shout-out in Corpus Christi

TxDOT employees helped a stranded motorist and were highlighted on Facebook for their kindness.

"Feeling especially thankful, appreciative and grateful for the wonderful TxDOT crew that went above and beyond the call of duty today," Peggylee Bordayo wrote on Facebook.


Bordayo found herself stranded on I-37 in the Corpus Christi area with a blown tire and no jack. Several TxDOT employees who had been working a previous accident in terrible weather stopped to help her. They flagged traffic away from the stranded vehicle, replaced the tire and even cleared the way for her to safely merge back on to I-37 — all in 5 p.m. traffic!

The TxDOT employees were **David Franco, Sam Guajardo and Jordan Rangel**.

Bordayo added, "So, next time you see these guys in their reflective vests and white fleet trucks, be extra mindful, slow down and give a friendly wave!"

Awesome Comanche County crews

Gail Williams in Comanche County has some nice things to say about the TxDOT crews who cleaned up the roads after a winter storm.

"I want to give a huge shout out to the crews who take care of our roads! You Comanche TxDOT crews are awesome! This is not the first time. Last year you guys were spot on! If you know one of these guys, shake his hand and buy him a cup of coffee. They deserve it!" 



125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

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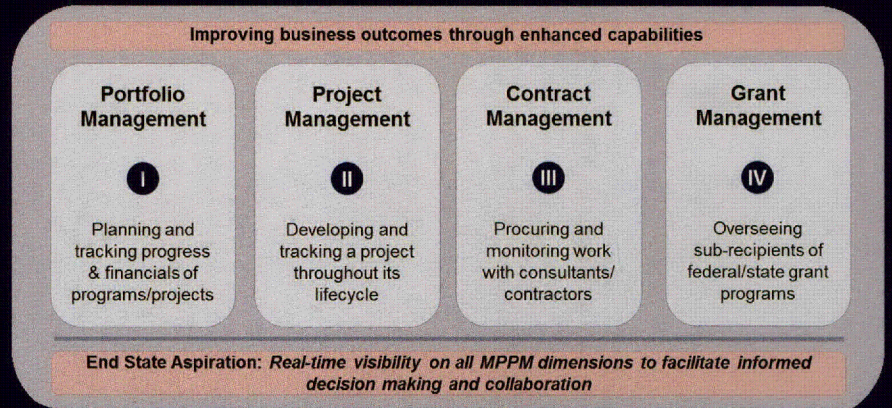
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TN Online (TxDOT computers only):
<http://crossroads/>

EQUIPPING TxDOT WITH EFFICIENCY

*New Project and Portfolio
Management System On The Way*



In fiscal 2016, TxDOT will begin to implement a new project and portfolio management system with a focus on transportation projects.

The Modernize Portfolio and Project Management (MPPM) initiative is aimed at making the work lives of TxDOT employees easier, faster and more innovative. Enhanced system capabilities beyond DCIS (the current system) will create new department capabilities, refine business processes, and allow TxDOT to make better decisions by equipping project

managers, technical staff, and agency management with better information and analytics.

The goal of the project is to provide a system that offers simple and intuitive interfaces, creates a core system of record for projects, reduces double-entry and data reconciliation, improves cross-functional teaming, institutes workflows and phase gates and allows robust “what-if” scenario planning and forecasting.

Last year more than 50 employees from TPP, design, construction, maintenance,

districts, right of way, environmental, etc. came together to form the Stakeholder Advisory Council to provide input and recommendations regarding the upgrade of TxDOT’s project and portfolio management systems. This year an Enterprise Systems Office (ESO) team has been analyzing the life of a project – from the time it becomes an idea in somebody’s head until it becomes an agency asset that is maintained – in order to produce a Request For Proposal. This analysis is the result of

119 DDO interviews, 1,500 end-user survey results, group workshops, and learning from other DOTs.

Later this year TxDOT will select an MPPM solution using a rigorous and inclusive process that will involve an evaluation team selected from among the DDOs and using input from the advisory council.

For additional information regarding the process please refer to the MPPM section of ESO’s Crossroads web site.