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# TN News

MAY 2007 Volume 32, Number 5

TRANSPORTATION NEWS — the newsletter for TxDOT people

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## Wildflowers

Page 8

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**FEATURE: 90 years – Department begins in 1917 (Part II), pages 6-7**

# Keep safety in mind

By Mike Behrens  
Executive Director



Mike Behrens

Summer is approaching — the time of year when the kids are out of school and families travel more, when tourists flock to Texas to enjoy our warm weather, and when more road projects are under way because conditions improve for working on highways.

But with the relaxing days of summer come even more reasons to focus on safety issues as we look forward to spending time with loved ones, traveling to get-togethers and celebrating some of the great holidays that fall during the hot weather months.

Because this is one of the most relaxed and relaxing times of year, I urge all of you to continue to follow the safe practices that we at TxDOT take for granted year-round as part of our job.

Indeed, safety is woven into every thing TxDOT does as an agency. You know it and we all practice it each day. Enhancing safety is one of our five standing goals. From work zone safety to railroad crossings to the buckle-up campaign “Click it or Ticket,” the department thinks safety.

I hope you will carry that work goal into your personal lives at all times, especially during this summer season, when outdoor activities, impatience to get to our destinations and distractions can cause needless crashes.

So, please —

If you plan an out-of-town trip to visit friends or family during the summer, make sure your vehicle is in good condition — and that you are, too. That means being well-rested before you get behind the wheel. The state’s safety-rest areas are there for a reason: to keep motorists from getting too fatigued. Take advantage of these chances to stop, stretch your legs and even take a quick nap.

Be courteous. Be the solution to problems — such as road rage, erratic driving, dangerous conditions — you see on the road, and not the cause. If you encounter a situation that has the potential to cause tempers to flare, move on.

Take your time. Leave earlier than usual if you anticipate traffic or weather-related delays.

If your plans include alcohol, plan ahead of time on how you plan to get to your destination without driving. That means you can designate a driver, take a cab or call a sober friend or relative. Don’t ruin your summer vacation or that of others by combining drinking and driving.

Enjoy your summer — safely. ♻️

### On the cover:

Spring arrived with abundant blossoms, and flocks of photographers came to capture images of our state flower. Even as family photographers take snapshots of their children nestled in bluebonnets by the roadside, one TxDOT photographer captured a restful moment for all to enjoy.

— TxDOT photo / Stan Williams

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## TxDOT goals

- Reduce congestion
- Enhance safety
- Expand economic opportunity
- Improve air quality
- Increase the value of transportation assets

■ TxDOT's State Highway 130 project has earned the department entry into the state's "Clean Texas" environmental leadership program. Overseen by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the program recognizes environmental efforts that go beyond the norm. The three-year membership levels are bronze, silver, gold (which SH 130 received), and the highest level, platinum.

Through its contract with Lone Star Infrastructure (LSI) to build the Central Texas Turnpike Project, TxDOT was recognized for using huge amounts of recycled materials. While the project used more than 1 million tons of material to build 50 miles of toll roads, LSI used recycled asphalt retrieved from the runways at the former Mueller Airport in Austin. This reduced the amount of virgin mined material by more than 250,000 tons, and reduced the amount of material sent to a landfill.

In addition, TxDOT built eight lodges to house bats along SH 130. Each lodge can house up to 5,000 bats, which help to reduce pests such as moths and mosquitoes. Bat Conservation International has recognized TxDOT efforts to help conserve the bat population in Texas.

■ Law enforcement and emergency vehicles don't have to pay tolls on state toll roads, including the Central Texas Turnpike System. That is the result of the commission's approval at its meeting April 26 of a policy to exempt first responders in times of disasters and emergencies. Included in the list of exempted vehicles are those responding to fire, crime, medical emergencies, and those carrying blood, tissue or body organs for transplant. Further, in the event of mass evacuations, the policy exempts tolls for the public during a declared emergency or natural disaster. ☺

— *Judith Curtis, associate editor*

## Summer — time to clear the air

TxDOT launched its annual Clean Air Plan in May, aiming to reduce vehicle pollution by changing the driving behavior of Texas motorists. Simple changes can add up to cleaner air for everyone. The plan runs from May to September, when the hot Texas sun heats vehicle emissions into a dangerous cocktail of pollutants.

TxDOT employees have the opportunity to help preserve and improve Texas natural resources.

While more information is available online through the Drive Clean Across Texas campaign ([www.drivecleanacrosstexas.org](http://www.drivecleanacrosstexas.org)), here are some ideas now to help those wanting to make the air cleaner in Texas:

- Drive less. Car pool, vanpool, consolidate errands into one trip, use public transportation.
- Reduce idling. If you frequent fast food or drive-through outlets, park outside and walk in instead of driving through.
- Drive the speed limit. You'll save gasoline and the environment at the same time.
- Keep vehicles well-maintained, and keep tires properly inflated.
- Buy a cleaner vehicle, one with higher gas mileage.

Participants also may visit the Clean Air Plan site online to learn of the plan's benefits and incentives. By logging their own actions to save energy, TxDOT employees can earn up to eight hours of administrative leave. ☺

— *Judith Curtis, associate editor*

### Letter from the editor

## Timeless tips for new drivers

By **Mike Cox**  
Editor

**W**hen I got my driver's license at the ripe old age of 16, my grandfather soon handed me a typewritten list of rules that went beyond state statute and city ordinance.

I don't have a copy handy, but two rules stand out in my mind with crystal clarity despite the passage of more than 40 years: "No roadside romance" and "No jackrabbit starts."

I already had a pretty good idea about the roadside romance issue (a rule I must confess I didn't follow) but I had to ask Granddad what a jackrabbit start was.

"That's when you let the clutch out

real fast while giving it a lot of gas," he said, probably immediately wishing he hadn't.

I had taken the classroom and behind-the-wheel driver-ed training, but I learned my bad driving habits from simply associating with other teenagers. Even in the early years of the LBJ presidency, peer pressure had a much stronger impact on teenagers than whatever a parent or, in my case, a grandparent had to say.

In late April, Transportation Commissioner Hope Andrade participated in a news conference with officials of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization as part of the first-ever Global Road Safety Week. The

(continued on pg. 11)

## TxDOT in person: Judy Manion, MVD

By Judith Curtis  
Associate editor

Back in Maryland, where she spent 11 of her 30 years as a lawyer in private practice, Judy Manion's peers called her "the barracuda." They meant that in a good way.

Manion, who serves as an enforcement attorney in the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) in Austin, is also known around the office as one of the most kind-hearted people. That, at least, is the assessment of her boss, managing attorney Bill Harbeson, who notes that Manion earned the division's "Employee of the Year" award in 2001 and 2005 for her diligence, even-handedness, competence, fairness and overall effectiveness.

Manion came to TxDOT seven years ago, and works with three other lawyers handling some 5,000 complaints each year from car or trailer buyers, law enforcement, competing auto dealerships, and other state agencies. Only 15 percent of those cases ever end up in court; most can be negotiated.

A native Texan, Manion is glad to be back in her home state, and equally pleased to work at TxDOT. "You're not getting me out of here willingly," she says of both Texas and TxDOT.

**People would be surprised to know:** She won a couple of novice fencing championships when she was younger.

**Advice to someone just hired:** Be of good cheer and work hard.

**Best advice ever received:** Don't feel sorry for yourself when difficulties arise.

**Best thing about working at TxDOT:** The people —



Judy Manion, Motor Vehicle Division

"They're intelligent, efficient and help you when you're down. And they can be a lot of fun too."

**Person who has most influenced her job/life:** At work, co-worker Carol Kent. In life, Jesus Christ.

**Literature influencing her thinking:** "Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare" and anything by Kate Wilhelm. Manion says the author influences her not to try to be a brilliant trial attorney.

**Family:** Six adult children living in Russia, Alaska, Wisconsin, Illinois, Dallas, and Austin. Among her blessings, counts her "magnificent" husband and two "wonderful" sisters.

**Interests:** Loves to read and travel; follows politics (don't get her started); goes to yard sales; enjoys dancing and gardening.

**Education:** Graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor of science in business and from the University of Maryland School of Law. ☺

## Desktop diners — keep it clean

By Judith Curtis  
Associate editor

The average office desk — home to about 10 million microbes — is 400 times more contaminated with bacteria than a toilet seat. A microbe, as textbooks point out, is a very tiny form of life.

Let's face it — some forms of life are best put out of their misery, especially if you want to avoid the worst of their possible consequences.

Things like strep throat and pneumonia, or the viruses responsible for colds and the flu. Or staphylococcus, which can cause skin infections and meningitis. Or the bacillus *E. coli*, responsible for ailments ranging from diarrhea to kidney failure.

Eating at your desk — an act as American as fast-food joints, super-size meals and perpetual dieting — may rank low on anybody's list of preferred dining venues. But according

to the Washington Post, 75 percent of office workers eat lunch at their desks two or three times a week. And they dine surrounded by germ-infested equipment — telephones, computer keyboards, corded and wireless mice, and desktops.

All office workers should consider telephones, water fountains and microwave-door handles and keyboards as potential Petri dishes for all manner of germs. Indeed, experts

*(continued on pg. 9)*

# TxDOT in the news

■ **SAN ANTONIO** — TxDOT supports a multi-million dollar program to renovate or reconstruct dozens of safety-rest areas in Texas. Federal and state dollars being spent across the state are meant to get travelers out of their cars to rest and improve safety. Rest areas in the Texas Panhandle are reinforced to provide emergency shelter from tornados. The 32 newly renovated rest stops completed so far have cost \$114 million, with the total expected to be near \$300 million when the remainder are complete. (*WOAI-TV*, 5/9/07)

■ **MISSION** — TxDOT has prioritized construction of a three-mile connector from the Anzalduas bridge. As planned, the four-lane divided highway with two overpass connectors would go north from the bridge to Stewart Road before cutting over to Bryan Road and heading to Expressway 83. If traffic counts warrant, the project could be turned into a full expressway a few years down the road. Contracts go out for bids in January 2008 to finish by bridge completion in June 2009. (*McAllen Monitor*, 5/8/07)

■ **SALADO** — Town residents reviewed the Interstate 35 expansion planned by TxDOT in an evening meeting May 3. The town, economically dependent on tourism and shopping, wants an idea of how the interstate expansion from four to six lanes will impact the town when construction reaches there in 2011.

The town, once a stage-coach stop on the Chisholm Trail, has citizens who expect construction will disrupt visitor flow to the area. The \$1.5 billion project, scheduled for completion in 2015, includes 17 projects through three counties covering 90 miles. (*KVUE-TV*, 5/2/07)

■ **ODESSA** — Construction begins soon on a two-year project to build a seventh exit on Interstate 20 in the largest Odessa District project ever undertaken (\$24.6 million). The overpass will take JBS Parkway over Business Interstate 20 and the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The expanded construction time is necessitated by the 45 days needed to dry the concrete before vehicles can drive on it. (*Odessa American*, 5/1/07)

■ **GALVESTON** — TxDOT and Galveston County have agreed to a pass-through toll agreement for FM 646. The extension will start construction this summer and stretch from Interstate 45 to FM 1764. The funding mechanism jump starts priority road projects with the county paying for engineering and construction costs and with TxDOT reimbursing the county based on traffic counts on the roadway over time. Without the new funding technique, approved by the Legislature, the project wouldn't be complete until 2020 according to Galveston County Judge Jim Yarbrough, who noted the project

would already be complete if the option had been available 10 years ago. The construction of FM 646, including road widening, will be complete in early summer 2010. (*Clear Lake Citizen*, 4/20/07)

■ **AUSTIN** — TxDOT opened another portion of State Highway 45 from RM 620 west to U.S. 183 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 23, with opening of the westbound lanes on April 26 and eastbound on April 27. Plans for SH 45, unveiled in 2003, were part of a \$2.2 billion tollroad package including SH 130 and U.S. 183A. (*Austin Business Journal*, 4/19/07)

■ **LUFKIN** — The “Don't Mess with Texas Trash-Off” saw 100,000 people taking part across Texas. Angelina County participants will share \$2,000 in prize money for doing their share by picking up an anticipated 2,000 bags of trash in their area. It's TxDOT's biggest litter-prevention event of the year. It is a day when Keep Texas Beautiful volunteers and Adopt-a-Highway participants get together to clean up roadside litter. The program, based on a 1985 idea from former TxDOT District Engineer Bobby Evans in Tyler, has expanded to every state in the nation and several foreign countries. TxDOT spends more than \$24 million annually on litter removal. (*Lufkin Daily News*, 4/7/07)

— **Bill Powell, TxDOT PIO**

# 1917 snapshot

**Jan. 10, 1917** — Wild West showman William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody dies in Denver.— In his message to the 35th Legislature, Texas Gov. James E. Ferguson proposes creation of a state highway department.

**Feb. 3, 1917** — United States breaks diplomatic relations with Germany.

**March 1, 1917** — U.S. government publicly releases contents of the Zimmermann Telegram, in which Germany offers to give the American Southwest, including Texas, back to Mexico if Mexico would declare war against the United States.

**March 19, 1917** — House Bill 2, the measure establishing a state highway commission, is delivered to Gov. Ferguson following final passage.

**April 6, 1917** — Congress declares war on Germany and the entry of the United States in what would become known as World War I.

**May 26, 1917** — Iowa-born Marion Morrison turns 10. He eventually changes his name to John Wayne, better known as "The Duke."

**June 5, 1917** — The military begins drafting men for service in the armed forces.

**July 1917** — Highway Department employee J.D. Miller draws the first state highway map, marking 26 numbered highways across the state.

**Aug. 23, 1917** — Race riot involving soldiers erupts at Houston's Camp Logan.

**Sept. 24, 1917** — Texas Senate votes for conviction in the impeachment proceedings against Gov. Ferguson, removing him from office.

**Oct. 15, 1918** — Dutch dancer Mata Hari, accused of spying for Germany, is executed by firing squad outside Paris.

**Oct. 19, 1917** — Love Field opens in Dallas as an Army aviation training facility.

**Nov. 7, 1917** — Led by Vladimir Lenin, communist revolution begins in Russia.

**Nov. 29, 1917** — Texas A&M Aggies defeat the University of Texas Longhorns 7-0 in their annual football battle.

**Dec. 26, 1917** — Invoking the Federal Possession and Control Act, President Woodrow Wilson federalizes nearly all U.S. railroads.

# George Duren planned first 'im

**By Mike Cox**  
Editor

George A. Duren, the civil engineer charged with planning Texas' first system of "improved highways," never forgot his first trip to Austin.

In 1887, his father, a Navarro County commissioner, took him to the capital city to see the newly built granite Capitol. They traveled in a buggy over dirt roads nominally maintained by the various counties they passed through.

On their way, Duren later recalled, he and his father got to see "a newly invented machine...an elevating grader. I remember the amazement and the approval of the people when they marveled at the way it plowed a ditch on the sides and piled up earth in the middle of the road."

Twenty years after that wagon ride to and from Austin, the State Highway Commission voted on June 4, 1917, to hire Duren as the state's first highway engineer, a position

comparable to today's job title of executive director. His pay was \$5,000 a year — a thousand dollars more than the governor's annual salary at the time.

For someone who had the distinction of being the first paid employee of what is now a 90-year-old state agency with nearly 15,000 employees, not much is known about Duren today. The only hits an online name search brings up are brief references to him on TxDOT's Web site. Unlike many notable Texans who played a role in developing the state's transportation system, he has no entry in the encyclopedic *Handbook of Texas*.

What is known is that Duren grew up in Corsicana and enrolled in the University of Texas School of Engineering in 1900. He learned his profession under T.U. Taylor, the school's founder. The 1903 *Cactus* yearbook lists Duren as president of the nine-member senior engineering class, whose motto was "Study Only When There is Nothing Else to Do."

No matter his class motto, he went to work for the San Antonio and Aransas Pass

## 90th birthday: More about TxDOT's earliest days

Nine decades ago, in April 1917, the Texas Legislature established the state highway department under the leadership of Commission Chairman Curtis Hancock and State Highway Engineer George Duren. Both men are profiled in this issue as TxDOT observes its 90th anniversary. The April issue of *Transportation News* reviewed the state's drive to build good roads and how the department's founders and friends of transportation undertook the work of progress in Texas.

# Curtis Hancock: lawyer first to

**By Mike Cox**  
Editor

Curtis Hancock almost single-handedly transformed an 16-page House bill into a state highway department in 1917.

Born in the small community of Pinchill in Rusk County, Hancock moved with his family to West Texas, where he attended Abilene High School. In 1897 he graduated from the University of Texas Law School.

Locating in Dallas County, in 1898 Hancock sought office as city attorney of Oak Cliff, which then was an incorporated city on the other side of the Trinity River from Dallas. Following the election of Hatton Sumners as Dallas County attorney, he named Hancock his assistant.

In 1903, Hancock won election to the House of Representatives from Dallas County, serving in the Legislature until 1907.

After two terms as a state representative,

Hancock focused on a private legal practice in Oak Cliff. There, as a member of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, he worked to promote highway development. He also served as chairman of the Dallas County Good Roads Association.

When the Legislature created a state highway commission, Gov. James E. Ferguson appointed Hancock, a few weeks after signing the measure into law, to be the commission's first chairman.

The North Texas attorney took on his



**Curtis Hancock**

# proved highways' for Texas

Railroad. He later hired on with the Dallas-Sherman interurban electric rail line, which was built in 1908. When he applied for the state job, he was city engineer of Corsicana.

Despite being the state's highest paid employee, his appointment as the first Texas state highway engineer received only perfunctory mention in the newspapers. One exception was an article in the *Dallas Morning News* he seems to have written himself.

"State Highway Engineer in Favor of Paved Roadway from Denison to Galveston, via Dallas and Houston," states the headline. The article went on to trace the history of highway development in Texas.

Duren also offered an overview of what passed for a highway system at the time, and then declared that improvements were on the way.

"The State Highway Department has in the Treasury available for aiding counties in the construction of highways at this time \$376,315.54," he wrote. On top of that, the state had \$786,986.70 available in federal funds.

"We are endeavoring to aid those counties as prescribed by law who are ready to construct any part of the highways designated by the State Highway Commission as part of our State highways," the engineer continued. "We hope to be able to direct constructive efforts as much as possible to the end that we may secure at an early date one or more continuous highways from state line to state line."

Duren said that he and commission members had already inspected hundreds of miles of designated highway routes in the state and planned to do more traveling.

"The State Highway Act is an important one and means something to every county in this State," Duren concluded, "and those county officials who are awake to its importance are not waiting for us to send a representative, but are calling on us in person in Austin and securing necessary information to enable them to intelligently act in the best interests of their constituents."

Duren left the highway department as of May 19, 1919, to return to go to work as a road engineer for Harrison County. Moving to Dallas in 1923, he went to work for a private company. In 1925 the newly incorporated city of University Park hired him as city engineer.

By the late 1930s, he was working in LaSalle County, Ill. His date of death and place of burial have not been determined, though his wife's obituary in 1958 said she died a widow.

During his two years of service to the state, Duren had guided the agency through its original process, purchased the department's first automobile, signed off on the state's first highway map, and oversaw construction of the state's first hardtop roadway — a 25-mile segment of the Austin-San Antonio highway now covered by Interstate 35.

Not bad for a guy who studied in college only when there was nothing else to do. ☼

## 1917 transportation milestones

■ With "motor touring" all the rage, American Automobile Association (AAA) puts out its first domestic tour book.

■ National Automobile Dealers Association organized. The U.S. has 4.8 million cars.

■ Henry Ford buys out his stockholders for \$105 million and change. Two years earlier, Ford sold more than 300,000 Model T's for \$490 each. Living up to a promise he had made if he exceeded 300,000 car sales in 12 months, he provided everyone who bought one of his Model T's a \$50 rebate.

■ Texas has four automobile manufacturing plants: Blumberg Motor Manufacturing Co., Orange and San Antonio; Ford Motor Co., Dallas; Lone Star Motor Car Co., San Antonio; and Wichita Falls Motor Truck Co., Wichita Falls. The Ford plant, opened in 1909, remained in operation until 1970.

■ As World War I heats up, automobile companies across the nation focus on the war effort, producing everything from trucks and ambulances to ammunition and helmets.

## Lead state's transportation commission

new public-service responsibilities with gusto. As commission chairman, Hancock quickly became the face and voice of transportation improvements for Texas.

Following Ferguson's impeachment (born of a dispute with the Legislature over funding for the University of Texas), all three members of the commission resigned. Only Hancock was reappointed by Ferguson's successor, Gov. William P. Hobby.

On Jan. 5, 1918, only six months after the highway commission began its work, Hancock personally delivered to the governor a lengthy report of the fledgling agency's accomplishments and a color-coded map showing the state's first systematic highway plan.

"A glance at the colors will show the extent of both State and Federal aid," the *Dallas Morning News* reported. "In many instances both state and federal money is

used on the same highway and the colors show it instantly."

Even after Hancock's highway commission service ended on March 20, 1919, he continued as a booster of good roads for Texas. He also served on the committee that named members of Selective Service boards throughout the state.

In addition to his other public service work, Hancock pushed for development of the Big Bend National Park. In recognition of that and in appreciation of his role in the formation of the agency that is now TxDOT, his successors on the commission named a roadway in the Big Bend the Curtis Hancock Highway.

In the summer of 1948, when the first multi-lane "superhighway" segment of U.S. 75 opened in Dallas (now better known as the Central Expressway), Hancock contacted *Dallas Morning News* executive

Stuart McGregor and gave him a collection of early-day road logs that offered motorists directions on what is now Interstate 35.

"The next twenty miles are good natural all-weather road," one of the logs advises, "but travelers are urged to close all gates because ranchmen have recently been complaining."

Though he retired from the active practice of law in the early 1940s, he continued to serve on the Dallas County Selective Service Board until his death at the age of 84 on Jan. 8, 1957. Hancock is buried in Laurel Land Memorial Park in Dallas.

Saluting his "long and fruitful life," an editorial on Jan. 10 in his adopted hometown's morning daily declared Hancock would "be remembered for outstanding performance in peace and in war in two major but differing fields of public service." ☼

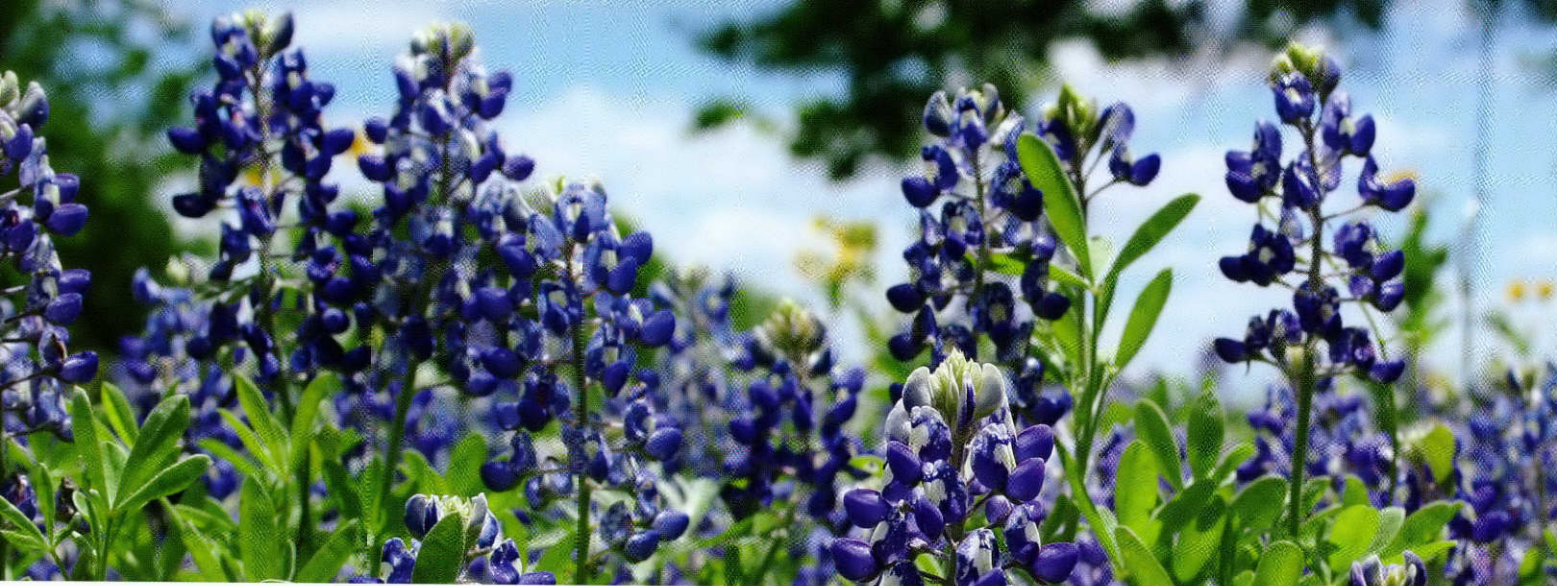


Photo courtesy of David Gonzalez

# Texas wildflowers lure visitors

By **Bill Powell**

TxDOT Public Information Office

TxDOT plays a big part in making the annual wildflower show by the roadside what it is.

What many people don't realize is that planting wildflowers on the roadside didn't start when Lady Bird Johnson popularized highway beautification in the mid 1960s. It started back in the early 1930s when the Texas Highway Department got its first landscape architect.

The value of wildflowers has grown as an economic generator for tourism over the years. Countless potential visitors to our state consult the TxDOT Internet site at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) by clicking the wildflowers category under "Travel."

They also check the TxDOT wildflower hotline at 800-452-9292 to make plans to travel to various regions of Texas.

Wildflower travelers include Texas residents and people from nearby states.

TxDOT maintenance workers made the magic this year by spreading 20,000 pounds of seeds, down from the 33,000 pounds of previous years. Considering the continuing drought in Texas, they hoped to prevent much of the seed from becoming expensive bird food.

Rain in the past month helped wildflower growth, but the

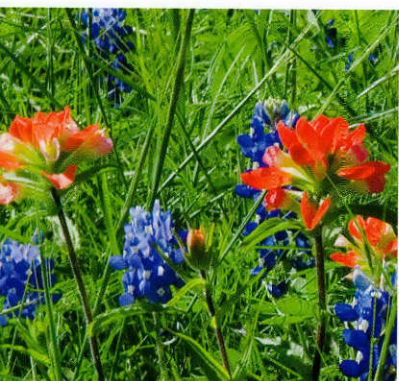
blooming of wildflowers is something no one can predict with accuracy.

Some facts not generally known about wildflower seeds include that there are 177,000 seeds to a pound with 30 varieties of seed in each pound. With this many varieties, the goal is to make the show last as long as possible. It's similar to a time-release capsule you might take for a cold. The first flowers to show — bluebonnets — come out in mid-March and last through April. As they die out, another type of flower is blossoming to continue the show until the end of May.

It's legal to pick bluebonnets, although it's discouraged because the plants will generate a portion of next year's crop.

Further, safety is a factor. TxDOT discourages such photos near busy roads and interstates due to the potential danger from vehicles passing nearby. Instead, everyone is safer when the photos are taken near less-traveled roadways or on private land (with owner's permission, of course). Instead, safe enjoyment is encouraged by moving to less traveled roadways or to private land for photos.

Texas wildflowers will continue to produce memories and beauty in the future — quite an accomplishment for the seed of an idea developed more than 70 years ago to prevent dirt from eroding from roadsides. ♣



TxDOT photos / Stan Williams



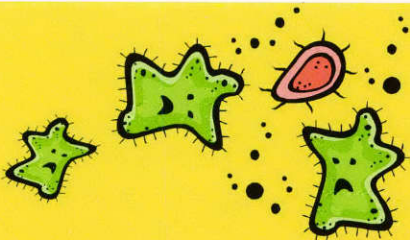
# Keep it clean

(continued from pg. 4)

advise desktop-diners to disinfect all office equipment frequently.

(For some reason, it seems, women's desks tend to be three times more germ-infected than men's desks. Part of the reason for that threat, according to a recent study, is a woman's purse. She puts the purse down on dirty floors in restaurants, movie theaters and public restrooms, transferring germs wherever else the purse later alights.)

Michele Regis, industrial hygienist in TxDOT's Occupational Safety Division, warns against using a co-worker's desk, phone and keyboard. "A shared keyboard or phone can become an area of germ transfer," says Regis. She applies the same advice for avoiding colds and flu to desk-dining: "Generally, use soap and water to clean off the desk and phone. ... Wash hands frequently and wipe doors knobs (with soap and water, or chlorine-based wipes)." ❄



For those who desk-dine, here's some advice from the American Dietetic Association and other experts:

- Keep and use a supply of antibacterial wipes, sprays and paper towels at your desk.
- Wash hands before eating, or using anti-bacterial wipes.
- Store perishables (meat, cheese, salads, dairy goods) in the fridge.
- Empty desk drawers of perishable snacks, which can attract pests and spoil in high temperatures when the office is closed. Non-perishables (packaged nuts, energy bars, ready-to-go tuna and cracker kits) and single servings of canned fruit are OK.



Beaumont District Engineer John Barton addresses the media at a Work-zone Safety Awareness Week press conference. TxDOT photo / Marc Shepherd, Beaumont PIO

# Work-zone safety: up close, personal

By Jennifer Walsh  
Beaumont District  
Public Information Officer

Beaumont Enterprise reporter Mike Smith said he always wanted to see what life was like for the people who worked on the highways.

The Work-zone Safety Awareness Week, held the first week in April, gave him the perfect excuse to ride along with Calvin Laverne and Alex Hill in Beaumont Maintenance.

"You always see them working alongside the highway and some people slow down and others don't," said Smith, a former state employee in Louisiana who has worked at this newspaper for almost a year.

"I just wanted to see what it was like to stand next to the highway and try to do a job with cars streaming by at 70 mph."

And it was just as he imagined it: Scary.

He tagged along with the maintenance crew for about an hour asking questions while a photographer captured the moment on film. The task at hand? Replacing a barrier wire installed in the median just south of Lamar on U.S. 69.

The article he wrote described the safety hazards of highway workers and landed his writing a spot on the front page (along with a photo or two).

The one thing that shocked him most was when the maintenance crew said people threw garbage at them.

"I was trying to imagine what it feels like if a car is moving at 70 mph and it hits you," he said. "Ouch!"

And he enjoyed spending the morning with the crew, describing them as "cool."

"My hat's off to them, they really do a good job," Smith said. "It's one of those jobs that has to be done but takes a certain kind of person to do."

Since his experience, he has adjusted his driving habits a bit.

"Usually I do slow down, and that's no lie, but now I always do because I've been there and you can feel the rumble of the 18-wheelers and the whoosh of the wind," Smith said.

"Being in their shoes kind of showed you or gave you a different perspective."

But he also tells others about the experience, warning them to give the highway workers a brake (er, break).

"I've seen what it's like, and they have no idea what it's like to stand there and try to do a job with cars going by at hurricane force," he said. "You know, if one of them hits you, the physics of it won't be that rosy."

The Work-zone Safety Awareness Week press conference brought media coverage from *The Port Arthur News*, *The Orange Leader* and Beaumont television and radio stations. ❄

(Editor's note: This article was adapted from one originally appearing in the Beaumont District employee newsletter.)

## MAY 2007

### ■ DISTRICTS

**Abilene:** 30 – Rondale H. Worthington; 15 – Robert R. Dean, Joe D. Jones, Sonya L. Mitchell; 10 – Christopher L. Cooley.

**Amarillo:** 30 – Robert Aguirre; 25 – June M. Baer, Emeregildo P. Rodriguez Jr.; 20 – Kendall L. Clawson, Lane E. Provence; 5 – Terrel L. Bell, Leslie C. Harms, Sonya Sanchez, John P. Soto, Branca R. Whitley.

**Atlanta:** 30 – Lonnie R. Hutsell; 25 – William L. Gatewood, Tommy L. Sparks Jr.; 20 – William K. Cook, Charles W. Lineberger, Kevin R. Mote, Steven W. Oney; 10 – Timothy D. Berry, Terry W. Day, Claude M. Lee; 5 – Clifton M. Colliflower.

**Austin:** 35 – John J. Howe I; 25 – Tracy L. House, Sharon A. Little; 20 – Blake A. Dommert; 15 – Darlene Y. Austin, Dennis W. Behrends, Girard K. Behrends, Slade W. Harris, Grady L. Moreland; 10 – Jason H. Hudson; 5 – Mercedes Fidelman, Troy L. Herman, Timothy E. Sims.

**Beaumont:** 30 – John C. Barteel; 25 – Daniel L. Cornwell, Steven C. Helton, Paul C. Hugon, David S. Maxedon, Johnny R. Perez Sr, John F. Snoddy Jr.; 20 – Samuel L. Willey; 10 – Joe N. Harden.

**Brownwood:** 25 – Kenneth L. Moore; 20 – Robert A. Carroll; 5 – Andrew C. Chisholm.

**Bryan:** 35 – Roy C. Pilgrim; 30 – Gregory L. Straughter; 25 – Curtis L. Beckham, Paul J. Oliver; 20 – Donald M. Sanders; 15 – Jessie E. Fenner, Steve B. Higgins, Neal R. Riddle, John R. Wallace, Nathan B. White; 10 – Albert S. Grace.

**Childress:** 20 – Paul W. White; 15 – Jesse R. Butler, Samuel L. Doby, John D. Ricks; 5 – Joe L. Bejar.

**Corpus Christi:** 30 – Rafael C. Lopez; 10 – Rey G. Espinoza; 5 – Steven A. Arzola, George M. Jones, Craig A. Wilson.

**Dallas:** 35 – Mark A. Young; 30 – Harold G. Campbell Jr.; 20 – Scot J. Bonds, Timothy K. Massey, Paul E. Williams, Charles W. Wilson; 15 – Paul E. Cooper, James P. Kern, Kimberly A. McFadden, Jack S. Pullen, Elliott Stovall; 10 – Mark D. Farris, Anita D. Gupta, Dennis R. Whitson II; 5 – Justin R. Barker, Jeffrey A. Bush, Mohammad H. Khoshkar, Charles A. Neal, Tamelia J. Spillman, Joseph E. Williams, Mohammad Yahyazadeh.

**El Paso:** 15 – Alonzo M. Aranda, Benjamin D. Benavidez, Eduardo A. Martin, Pablo T. Salgado; 10 – Alberto Lara, Christopher J.

Weber; 5 – Rebecca L. Pinto.

**Fort Worth:** 30 – Michael W. Looney; 25 – Barry L. Haley, Anthony C. Jaramillo; 20 – Marsha M. Alton, Sammy C. Brazeau, Lindsay K. Buckler, Oscar R. Chavez, Jeffrey L. Hulse, Felicia H. Luther, Peter G. White; 15 – Scott B. Hall, Andrew V. Kissig, Anette M. Moss, Allen O. Shelley, Calvin L. Strawbridge; 10 – Bryan G. Anderson, Eduardo Armendariz, William D. Doggett Jr., Stacey M. Hodges, Terrance B. Sanders; 5 – Michael W. Baker, Bobby R. Elrod.

**Houston:** 25 – Elvia R. Cardinal, Eliseo J. Flores, Gary W. Fojtik, Glenn P. Grisham, Michael E. Johnson, Augustine M. Rangel; 20 – Clayton D. Long, Gary D. Witt; 15 – Roberto Hernandez, James H. Mims IV; 10 – John E. Beeson, Jo Maxine Carden, Cheryl D. Johnson, Joseph D. Maupin, Odell Richardson; 5 – Matthew M. Connelly, Sandra L. Osterman.

**Laredo:** 25 – Ricardo E. Pena; 20 – Edmundo Garcia Jr.; 10 – Loren Y. Castro; 5 – Marisa Ramirez .

**Lubbock:** 30 – James L. Harris Jr.; 20 – Robert W. Ratcliff, Julius N. Weiser; 15 – Michael H. James; 5 – David G. Moreno .

**Lufkin:** 30 – Eddie F. Allen; 20 – Steven L. Harris, David R. Selman; 15 – Jennifer N. Hightower; 5 – Victor W. McBride .

**Odessa:** 20 – Matt C. Carr; 15 – James L. Jenkins; 10 – Zane R. Honeyfield, Juan J. Rodriguez, Raul B. Rodriguez; 5 – Lydia C. Fuentes,

**Paris:** 25 – Eulas R. Watson, Billy W. Williams; 20 – Stacy E. Hatcher, Nolan G. House; 10 – Donald R. Wilson,

**Pharr:** 30 – Rosendo Garcia Jr., Jose A. Garza Jr.; 25 – Hector Cantu; 5 – Timothy M. Champion, Ruben Ruiz,

**San Angelo:** 30 – Donna K. Hill; 25 – Steven T. Deere; 15 – Frank C. Deloera,

**San Antonio:** 35 – Roland A. Ames; 30 – Clay R. Smith; 25 – Joseph W. Anders, Connie G. Casas, Nellie S. Nunez, Jesse P. Patterson, Richard J. Valadez; 20 – Melissa L. Bernal, Kenneth L. Jungman, Felix A. Lerma, Tomas A. Romero; 15 – Monica Muniz; 10 – Kent L. Skiles; 5 – Jayo R. Castanon, Edward V. Cruz.

**Tyler:** 30 – Tony R. Buford; 25 – Preston L. Massey; 20 – Donna H. Harrison, Wesley R. Price; 15 – Janice H. Allen, Charlotte S. Morgan, Danny M. Page, Royce K. Traylor, Joseph M. Word; 5 – Jane M. Reynolds.

**Waco:** 30 – Ricky A. Quinn, Chris A. Starr;

25 – Duane A. Schwarz; 20 – James G. Gremminger, Monte L. Kohring, Ricky D. Payne, Albin A. Petter, James G. Wagnon; 15 – Ali Bashi; 10 – Ernest S. Fincher; 5 – Jacob Chi-Chung Chau, Karen B. Hunter.

**Wichita Falls:** 20 – Alisa M. Browning, Johnny B. Herrell, Carole C. Mayo, Lester D. Moses, Brady L. Woolsey.

**Yoakum:** 25 – James D. Ivy; 20 – Brent A. Gorman, Terrel W. Maertz, Stephen J. Matula, Robert E. Maxey, Steven W. Tschatschula, James C. Untermeyer; 15 – Gregory L. Polasek, Richard W. Rouse; 10 – David W. Sternadel.

### ■ DIVISIONS

**Bridge:** 25 – Bobby W. Heine, David P. Hohmann, Dean W. Van Landuyt.

**Construction:** 20 – Mark A. Crawford, Douglas W. Dupler, Leonard D. Garcia.

**Design:** 20 – Robert J. Janek.

**Environmental Affairs:** 15 – Lorie A. Ledesma Ramirez, Henry G. Quinn; 5 – Amy D. Foster.

**Finance:** 15 – Patrick S. Palmer.

**General Services:** 20 – Kathleen G. Nichols; 10 – Emily Margrett; 5 – Rickey A. McCormick, Christopher J. Sustaita.

**Human Resources:** 20 – Marilyn S. Arteschoufsky; 5 – William J. Dickeson.

**Information Systems:** 25 – Rita A. Compton; 10 – Lien Thi Hoang Pham; 5 – John G. Adair .

**Maintenance:** 30 – John S. Alley; 25 – Dirinda J. Sharp.

**Motor Carrier:** 15 – Christine M. Reding; 5 – Tonya Graef,

**Traffic Operations:** 35 – Linda F. Wallin; 10 – Susan M. Felan.

**Transportation Planning and Programming:** 25 – Carolyn M. Hanson; 20 – Margaret D. Thurin; 10 – Stacey S. Lewis.

**Travel:** 10 – Kimberly L. Allen; 5 – Patricia S. Martinez.

**Vehicle Titles & Registration:** 30 – Glinda J. Ornelas; 15 – James P. Landrum, Sylvia R. White; 10 – Debbie S. Bates, Barbara E. Peck; 5 – Iris N. Bullard, Sylvia A. Vasquez.

### ■ OFFICES

**Audit:** 25 – Lee H. Stone.

# Exit Ramp

( ) = service years/month of retirement

## Beaumont

Jimmy D. Powell Jr. (30/March)  
Willie P. Myrick (6/March)

## Dallas

Linden P. Burgess (38/March)  
Johnny M. Haley (26/March)

## El Paso

Leonidez G. Abreo (32/March)

## Finance

Robert H. Rawlings (8/March)

## Houston

Burl E. Holmes (33/March)  
James R. Stoner (22/March)

Willie C. Henderson (21/March)

## Human Resources

Larry B. Baird (8/March)

## Information Systems

Charles H. Parr (33/March)  
Terry D. Dunlap (14/March)

## Lubbock

Terry M. Jones (26/March)

## Lufkin

Zebby C. Gray (12/March)

## Paris

Robert C. Slider (22/March)

## Pharr

Daniel Llanes (17/March)

## Right of Way

Polly C. Luther (23/March)

## San Antonio

Scott L. Hunt (24/March)

## Tyler

Richard H. Hudson Jr. (12/March)

## Vehicle Titles & Registration

Lanita J. McAfee (27/March)

## Yoakum

James W. Olsovsky (11/March)

# In Memoriam

## Audit Office

Dorothy Farnish  
auditor III  
died May 5, 2007

## Finance Division

Caren S. Cowfer  
financial analyst II  
died April 27, 2007

## Odessa District

Antonio L. Barron  
engineering aide  
died March 19, 2007

# Letter from the editor

(continued from pg. 3)

commissioner announced that with the help of those agencies, TxDOT would be expanding its Teens in the Driver Seat safety program.

Developed with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), Teens in the Driver Seat is the nation's first peer-to-peer safety program for younger drivers.

For more information on this innovative program, contact Russell Henk with TTI at 210-979-9411 or e-mail him at r-henk@tamu.edu. You also can visit the program Web site at www.t-driver.com

The program focuses on five safety rules, delivered to teenagers by teenagers:

- **Be extremely careful when driving at night.**
- **Avoid distractions, like cell phones and too many teen passengers**
- **Don't speed.**
- **Always wear a seat belt.**
- **Don't drive under the influence of alcohol**

Oh, yeah, and watch those jackrabbit starts. ☺

## Renewal notice / No. 1

Texas statute requires all state newsletters and other periodicals to present a notice in three consecutive issues indicating that "anyone desiring to continue to receive the publication must so indicate in writing. The agency shall furnish future publications only to those persons requesting."

Please note: This notice does not apply to TxDOT employees who receive their issues through bulk shipments and mailings at work. If you received your individual copy by the U.S. Postal Service (see mailing label on last page), you are eligible to re-apply for continued delivery of this publication.

To remain on the mailing list, please respond before Sept. 1, 2007, by returning this notice, properly signed and dated. **Return to: TNews, 125 E. 11th St., Austin, TX 78701**

Yes, I wish to continue receiving Transportation News.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Calendar

## 2007

### June

- 4-7 Research Management Committee Meeting, SA, RTI
- 4-8 Statewide Hurricane Exercise, MNT
- 11-13 Maintenance/Traffic Operations Conference, Waco, MNT
- 14 EPRS Implementation Seminars, Lubbock, CST
- 18-22 Internal Audit Conference, Austin, AUD
- 19 Emancipation Day\*\*
- 28 Commission Meeting, Austin

### July

- 4 Independence Day\*
- 17-19 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), CC, CST
- 18-20 Texas Transportation Forum, Austin, GBE
- 18 PMIS South Region Pre-Work Mtg, CC, CST
- 24-26 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), AustinA, CST
- 25 PMIS West Region Pre-Work Mtg, Austin, CST
- 26 Commission Meeting, Sugar Land
- 31 Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 31-2 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), ABL, CST

### August

- 31-2 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), ABL, CST
- 1 PMIS Northwest Region Pre-Work Mtg, ABL, CST
- 7-9 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), AustinB, CST
- 8 PMIS East Region Pre-Work Mtg, AustinB, CST
- 12-15 Design and Bridge Conference, Corpus Christi, DES
- 14-16 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (concrete pvmnt), Mesquite, CST
- 15-17 Texas Save a Life Summit, San Antonio, TRF
- 21-23 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), AustinC, CST
- 23 PMIS Northeast Region Pre-Work Mtg, AustinC, CST
- 23 Commission Meeting, Austin
- 27 LBJ's Birthday\*\*
- 28-30 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (concrete pvmnt), Mesquite, CST

### September

- 27 Commission Meeting, Austin

### October

- 8-9 General Services Conference, Austin, GSD
- 15-17 Transportation Short Course, College Station
- 25 Commission Meeting, Eagle Pass
- 29-31 Public Information Conference, Corpus Christi, PIO

### November

- 5-8 Research Management Committee Meetings, SA, RTI
- 15 Commission Meeting, Austin
- 28 Statewide Construction & Materials Meeting, Austin, CST

### December

- 5 Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 13 Commission Meeting, Austin

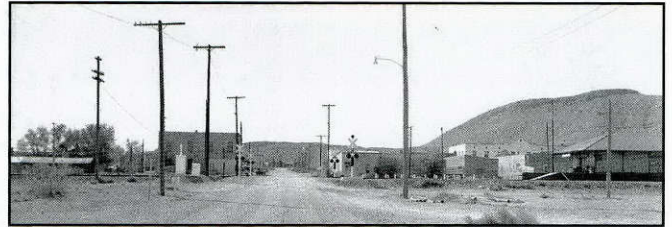
- \* = all agencies closed
- \*\* = skeleton crew holiday
- \*\*\* = optional holiday (in lieu of any state holiday where a skeleton crew is required)

The complete TxDOT Calendar is on the intranet at <http://crossroads/org/pio/articles/calendar.htm>

# backtracks



This photo obviously is in a developed area with construction work marking progress on either side of the unidentified roadway. Several buildings dominate the center of the picture with a billboard to the right in the foreground. If you recognize the location, please contact Anne Cook at (512) 486-5838 or by e-mail at [acook@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:acook@dot.state.tx.us)



**Identified** — Mary Boyd, Design Division, identified the site as Sierra Blanca. Peter H. Bustamente, maintenance section supervisor in Van Horn/Sierra Blanca, confirmed. The photo was taken looking south on what is now RM 1111. Landmarks include the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot (far right) and the building on the left, which used to be Sierra Blanca State Bank. ⚡

## Looking Back...

**Item:** Three employees in the Paris District lost their homes in the tornado of April 2. Four others had severe damage to their homes. Fortunately, no employees or family members were injured. Early reports counted 300 homes destroyed and 8 dead. Department employees later donated more than \$9,000 to help cover incidental expenses for the seven affected by the twister.

**Item:** The Houston Urban forecast for the 1960-1980 period was accurate within one percent on population and land use, but missed traffic volume by a 30 percent increase.

— from **Highway** newsletter,  
Texas Highway Department, March 1957



# T<sub>TX</sub> News

125 E. 11th St.  
Austin, Texas 78701

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