

T TRANSPORTATION NEWS

April 2003

Volume 28 Number 7



**A new look for
highway safety
page 7**

On the cover:

This Gray County earth shelter safety rest area, located 70 miles east of Amarillo, blends into the Panhandle landscape and becomes part of it. This organic architecture, as it is called, minimizes energy use.

TxDOT photo by Geoff Appold, Travel Division

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Straight Talk



Co-workers put lives on the line to liberate Iraqis

by Mike Behrens

Executive Director

Thirty-four members of our TxDOT family are currently serving in the military. Another 107 are waiting to see if they will be called up to Iraq, Kuwait or elsewhere. These men and women who work beside us each day are part of our lives Monday through Friday. And once the weekend is over, we expect to gather together back at work until another Friday afternoon farewell of, "Have a great weekend. See you Monday." We sort of assume that it will always be that way.

In the same vein, we may have taken for granted the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans and that other nations seek. We know from the wake-up call that blasted into our lives on September 11, 2001, that our way of life, built on a foundation of freedom, can be brutally threatened. The deployment of our fellow workers — and all Americans serving in this war in Iraq — is yet another reminder that freedom is not a gift. Rather, it is earned — by real people, people we work side by side with who are now more than 7,400 miles away in places like Basra, Baghdad and Tikrit.

As we watch the war unfold on television from the comfort of our homes, it may strike some of us how odd it is to witness up-close and personal the deadly struggle of these soldiers without having to risk our own lives. With such extensive 24-hour-a-day war coverage, we may have come to take access to war without risk for granted. But members of our TxDOT family are risking their lives and their health, as are members of other workforce families around the country.

Although transported to a harsh environment from the TxDOT world — a cubicle next to yours or the shared cab of a TxDOT maintenance truck — these brave men and women remain very much with us, despite their physical absence. We think of them often and thank them from afar for their service. They are doing their duty to their country and to all of us safe in our offices during the day and our homes at night. We want our soldiers and our fellow employees to come home, soon and safely. Then we can thank them in person. ★

Health costs increase for employees

State employee health coverage will change effective May 1, according to the Employees Retirement System (ERS). The change, which will increase employees' health care expenses, results from the budget shortfall.

Some highlights are:

- Elimination of HealthSelect Plus. All HealthSelect Plus participants will be rolled into Health Select.
- Co-payments for primary care physicians will increase from \$15 to \$20 for HealthSelect; for HMOs, the co-payment will rise from \$10 to \$30.
- Specialist co-payments will rise by \$10; for HealthSelect, the co-pay will be \$30; and for HMOs, it will be \$40.

- Hospital co-payments for HealthSelect and HMOs will be \$100 per day up to a maximum of \$500 per hospital stay.

- HealthSelect co-insurance will change for in-area network from 90 to 80 percent reimbursement; from 70 to 80 percent for in-area non-network; and from 70 to 60 percent for in-area non-network. HMO reimbursement will remain 100 percent.

In addition, changes to the prescription drug program are:

- Increase of drug co-payments for HealthSelect and HMOs from \$5 to \$10 for generics; to \$25 from \$20 for name brand drug co-payments; and from \$35 to \$40 for non-preferred, name brands.

- If generic drugs are available they will be mandatory for HealthSelect. Initial prescriptions can be filled at a retail outlet, but further refills must go through the mail order program. Mandatory mail order for HMO members will go into effect September 1.

- Members no longer will be able to receive three months of prescription medications for two co-payments. Rather, each 30-day supply will require a separate co-payment.

In other benefits-related news, summer enrollment is July 21 through August 2. For more information, go to the ERS web site at http://www.ers.state.tx.us/Insurance/May1_Changes.htm. ★

Letter from the editor



On the wall in the lobby of the Greer Building in downtown Austin is a time-tarnished bronze plaque placed there in December 1947 by TxDOT employees. Its content is as somber as its appearance:

**A TRIBUTE TO THE EMPLOYEES
OF
THE TEXAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED
FORCES
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DURING WORLD WAR II
AND
IN MEMORY OF THE FOLLOWING
WHO
MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE**

The plaque goes on to list the names of 82 TxDOT employees who went to war and did not come back alive. One of those who died was the young brother of long-time executive director Dewitt Greer. Other TxDOT employees probably died during the Korean conflict or in Vietnam, though we could not readily find a number.

Now America is engaged in another war that may someday have a Roman numeral after it — Gulf War II. No one expects this war to last as long or claim as many lives as World War II,

but as this issue went to press, the fighting continued, and Baghdad was in coalition control.

As you will read in more detail in this issue, 141 TxDOT employees currently are eligible for military service and 34 of them have been called to serve. We hope they stay out of harm's way.

Here on the home front, other TxDOT employees are serving their state and nation in a different way — keeping a wary eye out for any threat to the critical components of our transportation infrastructure. Others are prepared to move into action if there are any incidents of homeland terrorism.

We hope you'll find our special "TxDOT Goes to War" coverage interesting. If you hear anything about any of our colleagues in Kuwait or Iraq, please let us know.

We're pleased to report that Bill Powell's story on his daily 150-mile roundtrip between Copperas Cove and Austin has resulted in a one-vehicle reduction in Central Texas traffic counts.

Until TxDOT employee Michael

Wojciechowski (Mike for short) — who also lives in Copperas Cove — read about Powell's daily commute, Mike thought *he* was the only person working for this department who made that long drive each day.

Now the two are carpooling. The only issue remaining to be resolved is that Mike likes Country Western music, while Bill prefers talk radio. But no matter what's playing on their radio, they're both singing the praises of carpooling as a way to save money on gas and lessen driver stress.

Finally, TNews has a slightly different look this month. To do our share to conserve scarce state funding, we have opted to reduce our page count from 16 to 12 each month and to use two colors of ink instead of four. Because of that, in the vernacular of publishing, we'll be "tighter" each month, but we're no less committed to providing you an interesting, readable newsletter. Please keep those ideas and comments coming.

— Mike Cox



OFFICE DIRECTOR RESIGNS

Jennifer Soldano, director of TxDOT's Contract Services Office, has announced her resignation from that post effective June 30.



Jennifer Soldano

She joined TxDOT in 1994 in the Office of General Counsel as associate general counsel. While there, she advised the commission, administration and department employees on a variety of legal issues.

Since May 1999, Soldano has headed the department's Contract Services Office, providing direction and support for TxDOT negotiated contracts. In 2002, the office reviewed approximately 1,650 contracts valued at \$2 billion.

POLLARD AWARD WINNER

Gerald D. Peterson Jr., P.E., a nine-year TxDOT employee, has won the 2002 Albert Harrison Pollard Award for Merit. The annual award honors a Materials and Pavements Section employee who has made a specific contribution in research, design, construction,

analysis, testing or administration in connection with materials or materials testing. Peterson was cited for his work in the Superpave Performance Graded Asphalt Binder Quality Assurance Program; development and implementation of the laboratory information management system for the asphalt lab, and research leading to new equipment; and a test procedure to replace the rolling thin film oven test. Pollard, whose widow established the award, was a longtime employee of the former Materials and Tests Division.

SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT SET FOR JUNE

The 15th annual statewide TxDOT Championship Softball Tournament will be played June 21-22 at the city of Austin's Havins Softball Complex. Entry forms went to district and division offices in early April. Entries must be post-marked by June 10. Late entries will be permitted by phone (512-445-6003). Call Ed Collins of the Austin District for more information at (512) 832-7041.

TEXAS SMOG VIOLATIONS DROP

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Texas was the only state to see smog violations decrease by at least 10 last year.

Nationwide, the smog standard was exceeded 700 times — up from

532 in 2001 and 516 in 2000. In contrast, Texas had 52 violations last year, down from 81 in 2001 and 142 in 2000.

Six other states (Florida, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Alabama and Utah) had modest decreases in smog violations. Nineteen states recorded no violations.

Overall, violations of smog standards increased 32 percent last year, the second year in a row to show an increase. Officials say, however, the air is much cleaner now than 20 years ago.

WORK ZONE SAFETY WEEK

TxDOT observed National Work Zone Awareness Week April 6 - 12. Through public and media events, TxDOT helped raise awareness and educate motorists about increasing safety in highway work zones.

Texas reported 140 highway work zones fatalities in 2001, the most recent figures available. The state still leads the nation in this area.

To increase safety in work zones motorists should: stay alert, give full attention to the roadway, signs and workers, use headlights, never tail-gate or speed and always slow to posted limits. Also, drivers should avoid changing lanes in work zones, minimize distractions in vehicles such as cellular phones, expect the unexpected in a roadway work zone, and be patient. ☆

Federal funding for aviation announced at conference

Texas will be receiving \$40 million in federal funding this year for improvements to general aviation and reliever airports, TxDOT Aviation Director Dave Fulton said at the Aviation Conference in Austin last month.

In addition, he said Congress has appropriated an additional \$7 million for improvements for four airports.

"Since TxDOT was given responsibility for airport improvements in 1991," Fulton said, "we have seen a steady improvement in airport facilities across the state."

Deputy Executive Director Steve Simmons told the airport managers on hand for the meeting that they do an important job for Texas. The benefits of general aviation, he said, range from monitoring weather to economic development.

The planned opening of a hotel and restaurant in a structure built to look like a hangar at the Gillespie County Airport in Fredericksburg is an example of how airports and economic development go hand in hand, Fulton said.

— Bill Powell

34 answer call

TxDOT goes to war

by **Tim Cunningham**
Public Information Office

Days and nights of ever-present news coverage ... the green glow of night-vision cameras ... explosions, rocket launches, burning vehicles ... It's America's war with Iraq in instant images from half a world away.

For many in TxDOT, however, the war is very near. They have been called to war, are waiting to be called, or know someone who may be called.

At press time, 141 TxDOT employees (see list on Crossroads at <http://crossroads.org/pio/tnews/milist>) were eligible for active duty; 34 of those have been called up. Of those eligible for active duty, 24 percent are concentrated in the TxDOT districts of Houston (17 employees) and San Antonio (20 employees).

TxDOT employees eligible for military service make up less than one percent of the department's entire workforce, according to Human Resources. Because of the dispersal of these eligible employees throughout TxDOT districts, divisions and offices, the impact on TxDOT operations is limited.

Nevertheless, TxDOT people are affected by the war in many ways. Here are a few of them:

Joseph LeBlanc, director of administration in the Abilene District, is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. His oldest son is on active duty in Europe. The elder LeBlanc is on active duty with the U.S. Army, assigned as deputy brigade commander out of Baton Rouge, La. He was called up Jan. 23 to sup-

port units going overseas for Operation Enduring Freedom and for stateside units supporting Operation Noble Eagle.

Larry "Buck" Buchanan, an engineering technician in the Houston District's Traffic Engineering Section, attached to Barksdale AFB in Louisiana, spent several months in Kuwait last summer helping prepare facilities for the present war in Iraq. (See related feature story on the Houston District's intranet: <http://crossroads.org/hou/forum/forum.html>).

Alma Piper works with TxDOT's General Services Division in Austin. Her mother, **Laura Sammons**, is a master sergeant in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. Sammons has been a TxDOT employee nearly 20 years and works with the General Services Division in the Electronic Publishing Center. She was called to active duty in mid-March. "I don't believe that she is in any direct danger but it really has made it hard on the family," says Piper. "She had to leave her home. And my little brother and I have been left to take care of the house, the pets, and our grandmother who was recently widowed. Really, it's just hard dealing with her being gone."

Jesse Rios, Pharr regional manager for the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, reports that his son, currently attached to a Marine expeditionary unit, is in harm's way. Rios said he received a letter from his son dated Feb. 28. The letter read: "Don't worry. I've had a lot of time for soul searching. I've made peace with myself. I'm ready for whatever may come." ☆

Hartman Bridge incident underscores war jitters

by **Mike Cox**
Editor

Only two days after the war began, the Houston district received a telephone call: Someone in a boat had been seen leaving a suspicious-looking package beneath the Fred Hartman Bridge.

Eight minutes later, the U.S. Coast Guard notified the district maintenance director's office that it had received the same information and had a patrol craft on its way to the bridge, which carries SH 146 across the Houston Ship Channel.

Those two calls set into motion a frenzied chain of events that underscored the importance of TxDOT's



TxDOT photo / Stan A. Williams

Fred Hartman Bridge, which carries traffic across the Houston Ship Channel.

role in homeland security.

Shortly after Maintenance Supervisor Gary Hall reached the bridge, a Coast Guard crew did dis-

cover a package beneath one of the bridge's piers. Fearing the worst, local law enforcement officers shut

■ **See WAR JITTERS, Page 11**

Recycling of scrap tires achieves TxDOT record

by **Tim Cunningham**
Public Information Office

Where the rubber meets the road nowadays, more of the road is being made of rubber. TxDOT is leading the way in making improved road surfaces with recycled rubber from scrap tires.

The department also is pushing ahead in the effort to rid the state of scrap tires while enhancing environmental quality and the cost-effectiveness of roadways.

TxDOT recently reported to the Texas Legislature on progress in addressing the problem of discarded scrap tires — in partnership with the Texas Commission on

Environmental Quality.

For the first time in Texas, the report says, the number of scrap tires properly disposed or recycled exceeds the number of tires discarded.

In fiscal 2002, TxDOT projects used the equivalent of 1.6 million scrap tires. That's the largest single-year use of scrap tires in department history.

Continuing a trend of the two previous years, during fiscal 2001 TxDOT increased use of the products made with recycled tires by 19 percent.

The report also notes a 500,000 reduction in scrap-tire stockpiles in

2002 compared to the previous year.

"Progress Report on Using Scrap Tires and Crumb Rubber in Highway Construction Projects" is the fourth annual report to the Legislature jointly issued by the two agencies. The full report is available at www.dot.state.tx.us/GSD/recycle/roads.htm.

The report highlights TxDOT districts (El Paso, San Antonio and Fort Worth) for their use of rubber-modified asphalt paving or other applications of scrap tires.

Larry Zatopek, director of TxDOT's General Services Division, which oversees the department's recycling program, says that crumb rubber used in roadway applications largely has come from outside Texas in the past, but TxDOT's increased use of crumb-rubber modifier (known as CRM) "translates into a growing demand for crumb rubber."

He said that a new in-state source increases the potential for a convenient supply of crumb rubber, as well as for use of current scrap-tire stockpiles.

"We expect additional crumb-rubber suppliers to develop as TxDOT's use continues to grow," Zatopek said.

Benefits of using scrap-tire rubber on roadways include reduced maintenance costs, reduced cracking of pavement, reduced road noise, increased pavement life and environmental improvements resulting from reductions in stockpiles of scrap tires.

TxDOT uses scrap-tire rubber primarily in four roadway applications: crumb rubber-modified hot mix, crack sealer, pre-blended chip seal (first used in 1979) and in hot-applied rubber. ★

Hector DeHoyos Jr., Ozona maintenance supervisor in the San Angelo District, tosses tire scraps collected along I-10 into a pile that will eventually be recycled into paving material.

TxDOT photo / Kevin Stillman



See related story on page 8
**El Paso District sets record
using recycled tires**



TxDOT photo / Geoff Appold

TxDOT's new Route 66 safety rest area, located 70 miles east of Amarillo officially opened April 4.

A new look for highway safety

by **Judith Curtis**
Managing Editor

One of TxDOT's newest safety rest areas has put the kick back in old Route 66 — and more importantly, safety.

With the opening of several state-of-the-art safety rest areas using federal Enhancement Funds, TxDOT increased not only safety for the traveling public but also the fun of travel in the state.

During recent opening ceremonies of the Route 66 safety rest area 70 miles east of Amarillo on I-40, TxDOT, local officials and residents celebrated the creation of what many said is clearly more than just a stop along the way.

"This rest stop is the greatest," said Delbert Trew, local retired rancher and member of the Route 66 Association actively involved in the plans for the safety

rest area. "Not only does this give rest and comfort to travelers, but it's a tourist attraction in itself."

Route 66, slowly phased out by Interstate 40, lies under the parking lot of the safety rest area, but it remains a theme for the new facility. Murals in the restrooms, for example, display fast cars and the words "Get your Kicks on Route 66" in brightly colored tiles, and neon signs beckon drivers at night.

The art deco style safety rest area also has a tornado shelter, separate parking lots for trucks and cars, walking paths, a playground, an office for peace officers and Texas-shaped barbecue pits in covered picnic areas.

"We are embarking on a new era of safety rest areas and a new level of safety," said Amarillo District Engineer Mark Tomlinson. "Texas rest areas won't just

■ See SAFETY, Page 8

El Paso District sets record using recycled tires

by Blanca Del Valle
El Paso District

TxDOT's El Paso District is doing its part for recycling in a big way. The district's 2002 seal-coat project set a world record for the most tons of recycled tires used on a hot asphalt-rubber seal-coat project, according to the Rubber Pavement Association.

Including the district's seal coat in 2001, the district's porous-friction course in 2001, and the 2002 district-wide seal coat, the El Paso District helped roads last longer and saved taxpayer money.

The district also was successful in using more than 805,000 recycled tires. More than 700 miles of roads in the district have been seal-coated with hot asphalt-rubber and plant-mix seal. Recycled tires play a key part in preparing seal coat.

TxDOT's El Paso and Bryan districts were the first to use this process in Texas in 1976. Since then, more than 20 districts have used this method.

Two methods are used to produce crumb rubber. One is to grind the tires; the other is to freeze them.

Both methods remove contaminants including fabric, metal and other non-rubber substance. The crumb-rubber seal-coat method has many benefits over traditional asphalt or emulsified-seal coats. These include:

- Protection — tire companies add ultra-violet protection to tires to prevent sun damage. Grinding these tires and adding them to the asphalt gives the hot asphalt-rubber membrane protection from ultra-violet rays. This adds to the life of the road-way seal.
- Resilience — rubber added to the asphalt increases the elasticity of the hot asphalt membrane.
- Endurance — the life span of a regular seal coat is approximately seven years, while the life span of the crumb-rubber seal coat may be more than 12 years.
- Cost-effectiveness — the average cost per lane mile for a hot asphalt-rubber seal coat is \$78.15 less than the traditional coat of asphalt seal. ☆

Safety rest areas get new look

Continued from Page 7

be a short stop along the way. They'll be a destination." The earth-shelter safety rest area for westbound I-40 travelers blends into the landscape and, at the same time, adorns it with such touches as Lone Star fence railings and building-sized slabs of concrete with star-shaped cutouts ten feet high.

TxDOT has 102 safety rest areas visited by more than 50 million people a year. Texas also has the highest number of fatigue-related crashes in the nation, said Assistant Executive Director of Engineering Operations Amadeo Saenz, who spoke at opening ceremonies in Amarillo and Childress, where two other safety rest areas were dedicated.

Because of those statistics, said Saenz, attractive features — such as murals in the restrooms, computers for calculating distances between towns or to find accommodations, restaurants or local sights — are necessities.

"These are not optional features,"

he said. "The safe and efficient movement of people and goods is part of our mission. These facilities will help us reach that goal." Indeed, said Zane Webb, director of the maintenance division, "These safety rest areas are not for TxDOT; these are for people traveling down our highways."

In 1999, the Texas Transportation Commission approved the use of federal Enhancement Funds to renovate, build or relocate Texas' aging rest areas. The Commission approved \$32 million in federal funding, and \$6.4 million was provided in state matching funds; another \$13.8 million was carried over from state highway funds to begin the project.

In August 2001, the Commission approved \$48 million in Enhancement Funds and \$12 million in state matching funds to continue the project. Plans include construction of 26 new facilities and renovation of 43 existing safety rest areas.

Safety rest areas have been completed in the following counties:

Brooks; Coke; Colorado; Culberson; Donley; Gillespie; Gray; Hardeman; Kenedy; Live Oak; Victoria.

Andy Keith, TxDOT safety rest area program manager, said that the overhaul is a direct response to public complaints about the state's deteriorating rest areas.

"This undoes all that," he said. "We wanted to turn it all around so people go to these areas and not avoid them for fear of crime or a dirty rest room. We made it so that this is an anticipated stop for people."

Currently, nine safety rest areas are under construction in Cherokee, Crosby, Donley, Galveston, Hale and Medina counties.

In the Childress District near Quanah, another set of safety rest areas using the local theme of grain silos also was dedicated in April.

"This highway is a big economic engine for this community," said Craig Clark, Childress district engineer. "This is an opportunity for the community to say 'stay a while.'" ☆



To: TxDOT, Pharr District
From: Kenneth Jones Jr.

It is my privilege to provide this letter of recognition/commendation for TxDOT employee **Michael Vela**.

On the morning of Dec. 3, I experienced a major tire blow-out on Expressway 281. Trying to change a tire on a high-speed thoroughfare can be a dangerous endeavor. Mr. Vela pulled over to offer assistance and immediately improved the safety of the situation with his vehicle warning lights and traffic cones. With his assistance I was back on the road in no time and, more importantly, in one piece.

Mr. Vela's initiative is a credit to the TxDOT Pharr District Office, and he has my highest compliments and thanks for his actions.

(Michael Vela is an inspector in the Pharr Area Office and has been with TxDOT 15 years. The author of the letter is executive director of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.)

To: TxDOT, San Angelo District
From: J. Gore, Chief, Ballinger Police Department

On Jan. 16, 2003, I was working a traffic accident at the intersection of Highway 67 and Highway 158. Traffic was extremely heavy and emergency medical personnel were on the scene. I had some assistance from the Runnels County Sheriff's Office and one of my off-duty officers attempting to help me with traffic.

I looked up and took note of **Charlie Cook** on the scene. In a very short time he had employees taking care of fuel and oil spillage on the highway, and he had several personnel posted at either end of the accident scene, greatly assisting my other officer with traffic control.

Several personnel remained at the scene until the highway was cleared, and then they sanded and removed the remainder of the fuel and oil that had been spilled in the accident. The cleanup was done in a brief and professional manner.

This is only one situation of many where state employees have rendered

valuable assistance in traffic control and provided safer conditions for me and my officers to take care of injured drivers and clearing traffic accidents.

I wish to take this time to make you aware of the high regard placed on the staff and personnel of our local TxDOT organization by myself and my officers in the field. They are an exceptional addition to our community.

(Charlie Cook is maintenance supervisor in the San Angelo District. Others from the district who helped at the scene on Jan. 16 included Crew Chief David Killingsworth and Maintenance Technicians Michael Ramon, Richard Lange, Francisco Mendez, Queandro Quarles, and Terry Goetz.)

To: TxDOT, Tyler District
From: Jack Grier, Tyler, TX

As I was leaving a gun range on State Highway 31 West, I lost my deer rifle. Believing it was gone forever, I decided to put a classified advertisement in the Tyler *Morning Telegraph* in hope someone had found it and would see my "lost and found."

The first day my ad appeared in the paper, I received a call telling me my gun had been found. For his honesty and his extra effort to find the owner, **Jay Tullos** deserves a field of roses. It really makes me feel good to know we still have honest young men like Mr. Tullos.

(This letter first appeared in the Tyler Morning Telegraph under the heading "An Honest Man" in the newspaper's Raves, Rants and Roses column. Jay Tullos is the environmental coordinator for the Tyler District.)

To: TxDOT, Corpus Christi District
From: Lawrence A. Wilson, Folsom, LA

My wife and I were traveling to the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival at Harlingen on U.S. 77 when we had a flat tire just outside of Kingsville. You can imagine the sinking feeling as I prepared to unload the full-sized spare and made preparations to change the wheel.

Almost immediately, **Sam Garcia** and his partner, **Joe Salinas**, from the Kingsville division of TxDOT pulled up behind us and took charge. Mr. Salinas set out the orange caution flag and warned oncoming motorists of the situation. Mr. Garcia would not let me do anything except read the SUV's manual to determine the jack lift points on the vehicle.

After he installed the spare and placed the damaged tire and jack back into the car, Mr. Garcia directed us back to Kingsville and a local tire dealer. He strongly suggested that we not continue to travel without a spare through the King Ranch area.

Mr. Garcia was especially courteous and helpful and I offered a token of our appreciation for his (and his partner's) help. He would not take even a cold drink from our cooler in return. My wife and I are most grateful for this generous act of compassion. It's actions like this that make traveling the Texas highways safe and comfortable.

(Sam Garcia and Joe Salinas are maintenance technicians in the Corpus Christi District.)

To: TxDOT
From: Jon C. Elliott, Hewitt, TX

I retired from the San Angelo District in January 1998. The TxDOT Web site was in the early stages of development. I just logged on to the site after not seeing it for a while. Wow! What a great site. Anyone can find just what they need. Thanks for an excellent Web site. I will visit it frequently.

One of my duties was to collect and forward road and weather conditions to Austin. I was also the district permit clerk, so you know how much it meant to be able to check with Central Permit and have them help handle customers and to provide information. I have a lot of respect for the men and women that staff the Central Permit Office. Give them my best wishes.

(This note was received as an e-mail through the Motor Carrier Division.)



Abilene District **25 years**

Reynoldo S. Ramos
15 years
Daniel P. Richardson
Glenn P. Wiggins

10 years

Roy M. Dill
5 years
Patricia A. Gabbard
Diane K. Powers
James W. Terry

Amarillo District **10 years**

Devin W. Cowart
5 years
Michael D. Brown

Atlanta District **20 years**

Jon S. Williamson
15 years
John M. Burns
10 years
Jerry L. West
5 years
Christopher A. Bingham
Carl E. Coats
Fred D. Crowder
Scotty L. Jackson
Christopher S. Moore
Samuel E. Nuckles
David C. Old
Daniel E. Pierce Jr.
Sammy R. Pool

Austin District **30 years**

Edward Villalpando Jr.
25 years
Mario E. Hernandez
20 years
Wilie C. Brundige
15 years
William H. Braswell
Calvin R. Thomas
Terry L. Walker
10 years
Dieter Billek

Beaumont District **30 years**

Thomas D. Black
10 years
Russell P. Bonnin Jr.
5 years
Ronald L. Champagne
Curtis D. Holmes

Brownwood District **25 years**

Richard L. Belvin
10 years
Peggy C. Bledsoe
Jana L. Osbourn
Weldon L. Swanger

Bryan District **30 years**

Larry J. Kopecky
25 years
Blane A. Laywell
Robert Ramirez
20 years
Paul A. Gurka
10 years
Cynthia A. Arizona
Lionel Colvin
5 years
Teresa J. Van Hoozer
Gurald T. Vanveckhoven
Victor M. Vazquez

Childress District **10 years**

James T. Patterson
5 years
Tom I. O'Neal

Corpus Christi District **15 years**

Curtis W. Shandy

Dallas District **30 years**

James H. Pickel
Philip E. Simons
25 years
Richard S. Dorsett III
Cathy W. Masters
20 years
Stacy E. Kimberlin
Charles E. Smith
15 years
James K. Chambers
Monnie H. Matthews
Anne M. Polk
10 years
Richard P. Barker
Lorenzo Garcia
Gerry V. Hennig
John K. Kiser
Tommy R. Seals
Miguel A. Valdespino
5 years
Alireza Askari
Harley J. Chisenhall
Ricky L. Murray
Greg P. Treadwell

El Paso District **35 years**

Alfred A. Klement
10 years
Aldo R. Cardona
Maria V. Chanez
Ismael Flores
Jose Y. Gonzales
Ernesto Gonzalez
Martin Holguin
Manuel Molina Jr.
5 years
Rodolfo Granados Jr.
Pedro Ojeda
Cesarío Salinas Jr.
Joel U. Sanchez
George D. Valenzuela

Fort Worth District **35 years**

Douglas A. Clay
25 years
Grover A. Schretter
20 years
Sherry T. Hoak
15 years
Gordon C. Abbott
Keith W. Harris
Alvin D. Meyer
10 years
Steve W. Bishop
John F. Cordary Jr.
James K. Griffin
Brian H. Harvey
Robert J. Pitts
Herman Rodriguez
Christopher M. Staud
Scott E. White
5 years
Danny L. Parker

Houston District **35 years**

Gary K. Trietsch
30 years
Judith W. Davis
Shirley D. Woods
25 years
Donald J. Lorenz
20 years
Yimkei G. Cheung
Russell D. Shelton Jr.
Larry R. Stephenson
15 years
Jimmy C. Barger
Nelson T. Christensen
Paul B. Eley
Ernest C. Kroczyk Jr.
Lisa A. Perez
10 years
Lynise D. Charles
Terry L. Dayton
Tyrone E. Gitrey
Patricia A. Perez
Raymond G. Rodriguez
5 years
Pamela G. Anderson
Ross H. Ayala
Robert D. Greenmyer
Teresa L. Hanson
Jack A. Johnson
Ricardo Montes
Jason A. Mushinsky
Sherman L. Poe
Jason W. Smith
Melvin Tidwell
Casey E. Weatherly
Deborah A. Williams

Laredo District **30 years**

Santos A. Garcia
20 years
Gilberto Pena

Lubbock District **25 years**

Phillip L. Barnett
Jerrrell C. Otwell
20 years
Michael W. Killough
10 years
Ellen S. Yates
5 years
Roger Reyna

Lufkin District **20 years**

Clyde J. Mathews Jr.
Curtis W. Shoemaker
15 years
Sally J. Quick
10 years
Cathy P. Mills
5 years
David L. Bryan
Kristine K. Chaney
Don E. Pledger
Henry L. Wilmore Jr.

Odessa District **25 years**

Pamela P. Brown
20 years
John P. Cooper
Cleon L. Payton Jr.
10 years
Judy K. Burton
Jorge Estrada
Dimas Lopez
Heriberto H. Martinez
Charles E. Vick
Michael J. Weis

Paris District **20 years**

Joe N. Strickland
10 years
Geary D. Allen
5 years
Tracy D. Cowan
Kimberly K. Gilcrest
Robert A. Horne

Pharr District **30 years**

Gilberto Garza
5 years
Dolores Canales
Carlos Cantu Jr.

San Angelo District **15 years**

Ernie D. Covington
5 years
Joe S. Gomez
Antonio Perea
Kenneth R. Schniers

San Antonio District **30 years**

Billy W. Harvey
25 years
William A. Miller
Richard Salas
15 years
Daniel L. Stacks
10 years
Jeanne L. Bird
Edna L. Garcia
Melissa M. Jordan
5 years
Michael S. Friesenhahn
Andy J. MacKlin
Greg R. Mendoza
Kyle W. Richter

Tyler District **20 years**

Jerry L. Frick
15 years
Daniel M. McClanahan
5 years
Gregory L. Skiles

Waco District **20 years**

Charles R. Padgett
David J. Pittman
James R. Stimmel Jr.

Wichita Falls District **25 years**

Melton A. Demoss
20 years
Kyle D. Walker
15 years
Marty W. Little
5 years
Richard K. Miller
Barry A. Payton
Stephen A. Ross

Yoakum District **30 years**

Carl L. Oneill
15 years
Donald W. Petru
10 years
Melvin L. Guenther
Rhonda R. Migl

5 years

Steven J. Bujnoch
William J. Gooch
Elliott G. Huddleston Sr
Thomas F. Kocian
James W. Konvicka
Martin C. Steffek
Jeffrey L. Stock
Lana K. Warnken

Administration **30 years**

Shirley K. Macick

Bridge Division **20 years**

Sammy W. Mitchell

Construction Division **35 years**

Lawrence W. Worden
25 years
Baldemar P. Maldonado Jr.
20 years
Karl J. Janak
5 years
James K. Eilerman
Justo Landeros III
Lawrence C. Smith
Albert N. Umeadi

Design Division **20 years**

Thomas D. Beeman

Environmental Affairs **Division**

25 years
Ann M. Irwin

Finance Division **25 years**

Donna L. McGee
5 years
Bryon W. Watson

General Services **Division**

25 years
Ellen A. Glass
30 years
Beverly A. Houston
10 years
Rebecca A. Lucas
Ursula E. Williford

Human Resources **Division**

10 years
Roberta A. Jones-Balard

Information Systems **Division**

25 years
William E. Kokas
20 years
Louis D. Sierra
15 years
Bryan C. Davis
Jerry R. Jones
Patrick H. Lea Jr.
10 years
Diana S. Hamill
5 years
Yesenia S. Moreno

Motor Carrier Division **15 years**

Diana G. Gil
Duwayne D. Murdock Jr
5 years
Roberta K. Calvert
Michelle D. Manigault

Motor Vehicle Division **5 years**

Mary H. Saldana

Occupational Safety **Division**

5 years
Michele A. Regis

Right of Way Division **15 years**

Michael W. Champagne

Traffic Operations **Division**

5 years
Sher Y. Neely

Transportation **Planning and**

Programming Division **20 years**

Don R. Noah
15 years
Angie R. Gardner

Vehicle Titles and **Registration Division**

35 years
Terald D. Houghton
30 years
Frances D. Stastney
Linda W. Walden
25 years
Joey M. Connell
Margaret P. Wood
10 years
Jeffrey L. Kirk
5 years
Richard Arevalo
Ann C. Arwood

Visit us online
Current and past issues of Transportation News have been available on our intranet site at: <http://crossroads.org/pio/tnoi.htm> for close to two years. We are in the process of expanding our online TNews presence, so watch for added features in the coming months.



August 2000
Houston District
 Paul Defoor
 Transportation Maintenance
 Specialist
 39 Years

February 2003
Amarillo District
 Robert P. Moss
 Engineering Technician
 17 Years

March 2003
Amarillo District
 Kenneth R. Word
 Engineering Technician
 37 Years

Len M. Mixon
 Transportation Maintenance Crew
 Chief
 32 Years

Glenda F. George
 Administrative Technician
 21 Years

Beaumont District
 Lynette D. Daigle
 Administration Technician
 22 Years

Corpus Christi District
 Jesus S. Hernandez
 Engineering Technician
 38 Years

Joe Garza, Jr.
 Clerk
 14 Years

Dallas District
 Charles W. Farmer
 Engineering Technician
 37 Years

El Paso District
 George P. Vickers
 Construction Records Auditor
 26 Years

Fort Worth District
 Carl D. Young
 Maintenance Technician
 33 Years

Houston District
 Tommy M. Dunkin
 Engineering Technician
 31 Years

Charles L. Simmons
 Engineering Technician
 21 Years

Oliver R. Smith
 Engineering Specialist
 19 Years

Curtis E. Vaughn
 Engineering Technician
 11 Years

Lufkin District
 Leroy McBride
 Maintenance Technician
 24 Years

Paris District
 Delores J. Campbell
 Human Resources Specialist
 14 Years

San Antonio District
 Frank L. Fischer
 Engineering Technician
 30 Years

Enrique C. Garcia
 Engineering Technician
 19 Years

Construction Division
 Nannie L. Moody
 Administration Technician
 39 Years

Dickie L. Winters
 Engineering Specialist
 33 Years

Human Resources Division
 Ladell G. Wood
 Manager
 16 Years

Vehicle Titles and Registration Division
 Terry O. Ericson
 Administrative Technician
 35 Years

War jitters cause unscheduled drill

Continued from Page 5

off traffic to the bridge.

The Coast Guard, meanwhile, had stopped two boats that had been observed near the bridge and was questioning six people.

Using portable X-ray equipment, the Coast Guard determined the suspicious package contained only a dead cat. Once that determination had been made, the bridge was reopened at 12:15 p.m.

The story of the false alarm was reported on CNN and in the following morning's Houston Chronicle. It also generated sighs of relief for edgy TxDOT employees and others involved in homeland security issues.

From TxDOT's perspective, said Otto Maresh, who coordinated TxDOT's response, it was a team effort — and an unplanned emergency response drill. ★

As the war in Iraq wound down, the national terrorism alert was lowered to yellow, elevated alert. The state's Emergency Management Service has urged all Texans to report any suspicious or criminal activity to local law enforcement. TxDOT employees have been asked to pay particular attention to bridges, overpasses and other key components of the state's transportation infrastructure. Specific information in regard to possible terrorism can be reported to the DPS' Counter Terrorism Intelligence Unit at (512) 424-2200 or (800) 252-5402 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. After-hours calls should go to your local 911 center.

Calendar

2003

APRIL

- 21** San Jacinto Day (holiday)
- 22** Earth Day
- 22** Environmental Seminar, Lubbock, CST (& AGC)
- 22-24** Advanced Public Procurement, Austin, GSD
- 23-24** Statewide Maintenance Conference, Waco, MNT
- 24** Commission Meeting, Austin
- 28** Bullet-Proofing RFPs, Austin, GSD
- 28-5/2** Project Management Course, Corpus Christi, TRF

MAY

- 1-2** Project Management Course, Corpus Christi, TRF
- 5-6** Contracting for Services, San Antonio, GSD
- 6-7** Comp. Sealed Proposals, Austin, GSD
- 6-7** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 8** Fixed Assets Management, San Antonio, GSD
- 9** How to Write an RFP San Antonio, GSD
- 19-21** Public Procurement Management, San Antonio, GSD
- 23** Basic Legal Principles, Austin, GSD
- 26** Memorial Day (holiday)
- 27-28** Contracting for Services, Austin, GSD
- 27-30** Transportation Planning Conference, Irving, TPP
- 29** Commission Meeting, Austin

JUNE

- 2-6** Audit Conference, Austin, AUD
- 3-4** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 9-12** Research Management Committee Meeting, San Antonio, RTI
- 10-12** Intermediate Public Procurement, Austin, GSD
- 19** Emancipation Day (holiday, skeleton crew)
- 26** Commission Meeting, Austin
- 30-7/3** DE/DD/OD meeting, Austin

JULY

- 1-3** DE/DD/OD meeting, Austin
- 1-2** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 4** Independence Day (holiday)
- 9** Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 16-18** Public Procurement Management, Austin, GSD
- 31** Commission Meeting, Midland/Odessa

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

backtracks



Was it a flood or burst pipe that created this pond in front of a Texas Highway Department building? If you know anything about this photo, please let TNews know by calling Quevarra Moten at (512) 463-6396 or e-mailing her at qmoten@dot.state.tx.us.

Last month's backtracks solution...

Sandra Balderas, wife of TxDOT employee Oscar Balderas Jr., was the first to identify last month's backtrack photo as the "Old Uvalde Crossing Bridge." According to Balderas, the photo appears to be the Nueces River at Highway 83 in Zavala County. This bridge crossed over to Uvalde County. The bridge was knocked down by the flood of 1935 or 1936.

Mr. and Mrs. Balderas would go on a picnic often at this location. Mrs. Balderas recalls how her boss (now deceased) was near the bridge moments before it collapsed.

Oscar Balderas Jr. currently works as a mechanic at the Cotulla Maintenance office in the Laredo District. ⚙️



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