

# TN News

JUNE - JULY 2007 Volume 32, Number 6

TRANSPORTATION NEWS — the newsletter for TxDOT people



**Saddle up!**  
Work outside TxDOT  
adds skills, experience

Pages 6-7

**FEATURE: Hurricane readiness, pages 8-9**

# We're ready for storms

By **Mike Behrens**  
Executive Director



**Mike Behrens**

It's the time of year for watches and warnings. Hurricane season is with us, and has been since June 1. That means that if all the weather experts' predictions pan out, we could see hurricane-borne floods, winds, storms and tornadoes whirl into our daily lives from now until the end of November.

TxDOT is ready.

After extensive planning and preparation:

- The department has its own emergency operations center that will act as the nerve center in the event of an imminent hurricane or other disaster.
- TxDOT employees have been trained to act quickly and as a team to deal with the effects of a hurricane on the traveling public.
- TxDOT has developed a comprehensive contra-flow plan to help evacuate residents from hurricane-prone areas days ahead of landfall.
- Our highway-condition reporting system has been enhanced for ease of use.
- The department's call centers have been expanded to handle more calls from the public than ever before.

Because many residents fleeing Hurricane Rita in 2005 ran out of fuel, we, and other state agencies, are urging the public to keep their vehicles at least half full of fuel.

All TxDOT vehicles in coastal districts must maintain full tanks when a storm is approaching.

In doing so, we (as an agency and as citizens) can keep the need for fuel manageable and constant, avoiding a huge rush on gas stations.

Last year, Texas along with the rest of the nation was fortunate that dire predictions of weather forecasters didn't come true. But that's no reason to become complacent.

In fact, the weather predictions indicate that the chance of a major hurricane hitting the Gulf Coast is 49 percent this year.

That's reason enough for us — whether we do so as TxDOT employees or Texans — to plan ahead, stay alert and heed the recommendations of local officials during severe weather. ☆

## TxDOT goals

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

### On the cover:

Joe Yanas, maintenance crew chief in the San Antonio District, spends his off-work hours rounding up cattle at several ranches in McMullen County. The 17-year TxDOT veteran brings his own horse to each job. He's among many in TxDOT who earn income outside their regular TxDOT work — sometimes for fun, sometimes for profit, sometimes for both.

— TxDOT photo/Domingo Garza

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■ Transportation experts will gather in July at TxDOT's second annual Transportation Forum to explore and discuss the steps needed for a transportation system that promotes economic vitality and quality of life in Texas and the United States. "Keep Texas Moving" is the theme for TxDOT's July 18–20 event in Austin.

Among the scheduled keynote speakers are Gov. Rick Perry, Alan E. Pisarski (author of *Commuting in America II*), and Gen. Barry McCaffrey, international affairs and national security analyst for NBC News.

Breakout sessions will include panel discussions about freight, the cost of congestion, economic prosperity, state and federal legislature updates, and the Trans-Texas Corridor.

**Online:** [www.dot.state.tx.us/ttf](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/ttf)

■ A TxDOT-commissioned study concludes that enhancements to rail, electric transmission lines, and highways would improve mobility, safety and economic opportunity along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Key findings from the study indicate that the Trans-Texas Corridor initiative has the potential to enhance mobility and economic development in rural Texas by providing new infrastructure capacity and options to existing and emerging industries.

To advance opportunities in the Ports-to-Plains Corridor and other rural regions of Texas, the report recommends that stakeholders work together to analyze opportunities, identify beneficiaries, and form partnerships to move development forward. 🌟

— *Judith Curtis, associate editor*

## Region advances toll project

### Commission boosts efforts to ease North Texas traffic

AUSTIN — The Texas Transportation Commission on June 28 approved a recommendation from North Texas leaders to accelerate improvements to State Highway 121 and 30 other congestion-relieving projects throughout North Texas by pursuing a proposal from the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA).

The commission authorized TxDOT staff to enter into a project agreement with NTTA when:

- the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) negotiates with the NTTA on major terms of the project agreement and submits those terms to TxDOT,
- RTC agrees to the quantification of public benefits described in the NTTA proposal;
- and when NTTA is able to close on all financial transactions necessary to meet its obligations no later than 45 days after the execution and delivery of the project agreement.

Major terms remaining to be negotiated between the RTC and NTTA include:

- the timing and amount of the annual payments;
- enforcement provisions regarding compliance with the toll rate policy, project schedule, payment obligations and other commitments;
- and the length of the agreement.

Prior to their 4-1 vote, commissioners concluded that the RTC recommendation helps the state meet its transportation goals to reduce congestion, enhance safety, expand economic opportunity, improve air quality and increase the value of transportation assets.

The action also supports commission strategies to empower local leaders to solve local transportation problems and increase competition to drive down costs. 🌟

### Letter from the editor

## Readers respond to 90th anniversary

**By Mike Cox**  
Editor

**W**e've received some interesting feedback on our two-issue (April and May 2007) coverage of TxDOT's 90th anniversary.

The most interesting of the interesting was a package from Darwin "Monk" Ivicic, who retired as an engineering specialist from the Bell County Area Office in 2003.

Highway 2, the original designation of the planned roadway from Laredo to Fort Worth pretty much tracked what is now Interstate

35 — as Ivicic pointed out, with one funny, little exception.

Though it didn't make a whole lot of sense in terms of how the crow would fly (not to mention how any reasonable motorist would want to drive), Highway 2 went from Austin to Taylor to Holland to Sparks to Salado and then on through Waco and points north.

A much straighter line can be traced from Austin to Georgetown to Belton. But in one of those amazing coincidences that apparently used to happen in the bad old days, Gov.

(continued on pg. 11)

## Family photo

**Jennifer Walsh, her life saved by a safety belt, says she loves her children all the more. Here she is with her three sons Royce, Ryan and Richard.**

— photo provided/Jennifer Walsh



# 'I survived!'

## Mom in rollover crash credits safety belts, urges motorists to buckle up every time

**By Jennifer Walsh**  
Public Information Officer  
Beaumont District

A Memorial Day weekend trip to visit a friend in Odessa promised to be nice. Little did I know my month was about to end a lot rougher than I had ever imagined.

I had just gotten off the plane and into the car and was traveling along a dark stretch of State Highway 191 about a mile from the airport as I chatted with my friend.

We were going about 65 mph when a big extended-cab pickup came flying from behind. Witnesses say it was going up to 110 mph and clipped our back left side.

The impact caused our car to swerve out of control and directly into the median. Before our car left the road, I looked up to see the taillights of the truck speeding onward. It didn't stop.

Then the horror began — our car was rolling upside down at high speed. For the next few seconds it was everything I could do to hold on and just wish the rolling would stop. The car flipped two or three times until we landed upside down in a

field in the middle of the pitch-black night.

You don't realize how important your loved ones are until you have an experience like that. I thought about the lives of my three young children and what it would be like for them without me.

I may have blacked out or been in a state of semi-consciousness. I felt like I was screaming, but it seems no sound was coming out of my mouth.

Later, I was able to release my safety belt and crashed to the roof of the car. Though I was disoriented, I got out through the backdoor. My friend had escaped a few moments before.

The car was totaled, but my friend and I lived. We both walked away — even if it was with a limp and some deep bruising.

The 23-year-old driver of the truck that hit us walked away too (after authorities tracked him down a few miles up the road). Police reports indicate his blood-alcohol level was at 0.202 — almost three times the



**Crediting their safety belts for saving their lives, the driver and the author walked away from this vehicle involved in a rollover crash.**

state's legal limit. He's been charged with failure to stop and render aid and with drunk driving.

His poor choices that night made us Memorial Day statistics, but it was our safety belts that kept our stats from being listed as fatalities. The safety belt is the reason I lived to write this article. The safety belt let me come home to my children.

■  
*(Editor's note: This first-person account is adapted from an article that first appeared in the June issue of the Beaumont District's employee newsletter.)* ☆

# TxDOT in the news

## Executive director to retire

AUSTIN — Mike Behrens, TxDOT executive director, announced in May he will retire from the agency effective Aug. 31.

Behrens, a 37-year TxDOT veteran, has served six years as head of the state's transportation agency. He said he will remain a vocal supporter of meeting the state's transportation needs amidst shrinking funding and growing demand.

"I will always be an advocate for the department and the need for providing adequate transportation infrastructure for this state," he said in a letter to Ric Williamson, chair of the Texas Transportation Commission. "I will continue to inform and educate."

During his tenure, Behrens oversaw the implementation of a vast array of new financing tools to help Texas better and more rapidly meet its growing transportation needs. These include comprehensive development agreements, pass-through financing, expanded bonding authority, and public-private partnerships.

"Mike Behrens' dedicated service has

better prepared Texas to meet the challenge of a rapidly growing population and an overcrowded, aging transportation system," said Williamson. "He is a true public servant who has devoted his entire career to improving mobility and safety for all Texans."

In an interview in the Austin American-Statesman, Behrens said that the time was right to retire. "I want to get back and stay in Yoakum full-time and be closer to family," he told the newspaper.

The Giddings native said that change — with one exception — has been a constant in his TxDOT career. "What has not changed are the people who perform the work. They go about getting the task done, day in and day out, too often with little recognition from the public they serve."

Williamson said the commission will seek "the best person possible to lead TxDOT" and will take some time to select and appoint a successor to the executive director's post. ✪

■ LUBBOCK — Changes are in store in Lubbock as Phase 2 of the Marsha Sharp Freeway became reality with the May 22 opening of the Texas Tech Parkway Bridge. The segment, two years in construction, will allow travel from 19th Street to North Loop 289. The improvement allows direct access to areas previously available only by driving through the Texas Tech campus. The addition is a part of the university's master plan that will result in the parkway becoming the main route through the campus. Indiana Avenue, the previous through route, is slated to become a campus road. (*KCBD-TV Lubbock*, 5/18/07)

■ CLEAR LAKE — Interstate 45 will expand from Dixie Farm Roads south to FM 518, said Janelle Gbur, TxDOT public information officer. She gave the news to the League City Chamber of Commerce. The contract, which will take approximately 30 months to complete, was awarded in June. The I-45 interchange and bypass project is expected to be complete by the end of 2008. TxDOT also plans to relocate the southbound exit ramp from I-45 to FM 518 to make exiting the roadway more convenient and safer for League City drivers. (*Clear Lake Citizen*, 5/18/07)

— Bill Powell, TxDOT PIO

## GBE + PIO = GPA on July 1

AUSTIN — Effective July 1, the Government and Business Enterprises (GBE) Division and the Public Information Office (PIO) merged to become the department's Government and Public Affairs (GPA) Division.

Coby Chase, who had headed GBE, now directs the new division.

Mike Behrens, TxDOT executive director, said the division was created to "enhance and strengthen the department's communications efforts."

"This new division creates one voice for the department's outreach efforts, and is intended to support our agency as it works to provide the transportation network Texans need and expect," he said.

The division will:

- Analyze policy questions
- Prepare the department's strategic plan
- Oversee implementation of the department's strategic communications plan
- Coordinate internal and external communications programs
- Manage media relations
- Arrange department business before the Texas Legislature and U.S. Congress
- Promote transportation solutions through business development, marketing and public conferences. ✪

## Second jobs offer funds, fun

By Judith Curtis

Associate Editor

They clean curbs, read meters, trim tresses, lasso stray steer, stuff sausage, and serve religious congregations.

TxDOT employees, as skilled as they are at their regular jobs with the department, also are a busy and talented lot when it comes to the second jobs many of them take on.

Their reasons for adding 20, 40 and more extra hours of work each week to their schedules are varied: they need money; they have a passion for their avocation; or they just kind of got roped into it and never left. ♣

## TxDOT policy permits outside work

It's understandable that some people may have to or want to supplement their income from time to time, says Kathy Harrison, who directs the Employee Relations Section in the Human Resources Division. "And that's not a problem — as long as they adhere to their work schedule. If they're calling in sick and going to work elsewhere," then serious HR issues exist.

Second jobs are allowed at TxDOT as long as:

- The second job doesn't interfere with working hours or efficiency
- It doesn't create or appear to create an ethical conflict with your public duties
- Your avocation doesn't appear to use confidential information you have access to as a result of your TxDOT employment

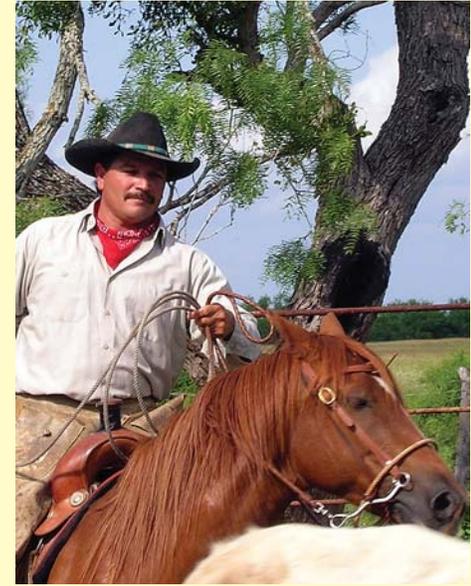
What's more, for companies or government entities that do business with TxDOT, there arises a potential minefield of ethical issues. Employees at or above A14 or B6

classification need written permission from the executive director to do this kind of work, whether or not they get paid for it. Contact the Office of General Counsel for more information about this policy.

Problems also arise when employees attempt to run their own businesses from TxDOT offices. It's illegal to use TxDOT resources, including equipment or work time, for any private business. "We've had to terminate people who worked with companies they were running from here," says Harrison.

In addition, she says, leave your second job at home. "You need to be careful to differentiate when you are with TxDOT not to discuss your other business or use state time to conduct" that business.

For more information, talk to your supervisor, contact Human Resources, or read the Human Resources Manual chapter on conflict of interest in Section 10. ♣



**Joe Yanas**  
**San Antonio District**

Joe Yanas, a maintenance crew chief in the San Antonio District, matches perfectly the dictionary definition of a cowboy: "A hired man, esp. in the western United States, who tends cattle and works on horseback."

When the 17-year TxDOT veteran leaves work most days, he heads over to the 3,000-acre Double K Ranch in McMullen County for two to three hours. He saddles up his horse, which he keeps at the ranch, and rides to where the chores await him. Sometimes it can be guiding the cattle into the pen, separating the big ones, ready for the processing plant, from the lighter weights, who need to grow a bit bigger before going to market.

He also rounds up stragglers, runs the cattle and makes sure there is feed for the animals in the pasture.

TxDOT photo/Domingo Garza

# eps some TxDOT folks busy



**Sendy Bolin**  
**Abilene District**

On Valentines Day 1991, Sendy Bolin and her sister made, as they had for years, their Friday afternoon trek to Candies by Vletas in downtown Abilene for their weekly chocolate fix. The shop was packed with customers.

These two regular customers pitched in to help behind the counter on this busiest selling day of the year. At the end of the day, Mr. Vletas offered these chocolate-loving sisters part-time jobs.

Bolin, district permit coordinator in Abilene, learned to hand-dip almonds, caramels, cashews, peanuts, pecans, white grapes, strawberries, and other treats. Her work supplemented the family income. But when she became a single parent, she soon concluded that she needed health benefits for her family of four sons. So, she came to work at TxDOT in March 2000 and keeps up her candy-making during evenings and during evening and on Saturdays. On a four-hour shift, she figures she hand-dips 3,240 pieces of candy.

“When I make candy, it’s relaxing,” says Bolin. Other benefits of the candy business: “We have grazing rights,” she says. “We can eat all we want as long as we do so in the shop.”

TxDOT photo/Mary Beth Kilgore



**Gene Ward**  
**Childress District**

Gene Ward has two full-time jobs, if you don’t count that he’s also a husband and father of three daughters.

As pastor of Liberty Community Church of God in Christ in Knox City, Ward also works days as a maintenance section supervisor in the Childress District.

His congregation has grown from about five people to about 30 today, he says, and a fellowship hall is currently under construction.

Ward says he tries hard to maintain the separation of church and job. But it isn’t always easy, he admits.

“You can’t push Jesus at work,” he says. But if someone asks Ward for advice on a personal problem, he can’t help himself. “I just say that I would try it ‘this way’ if it were me. But I don’t preach. I have to be careful of that.”

If he’s not at work or church or visiting a parishioner in need, Ward is planning his next sermon (a recent one was titled “The Church that Will Stand in Troubled Times”), meeting with regional church leaders, or escaping for a few hours to relax and recharge.

TxDOT photo/Barbara Seal



**Amy Vincent**  
**Atlanta District**

Amy Vincent, a travel counselor in Waskom, kept her second job even when she came to work at TxDOT five years ago. Though she says her in-home hair salon is “more like a hobby to me,” the single mom welcomes the income that helps her with her two children, now ages 13 and 10.

She works in her converted garage some weekends, and two nights a week until 9:30 or 10, depending on her work schedule. While coloring, cutting and coiffing, Vincent also manages to get some socializing in at the same time.

“It’s not a job. My clients are my friends,” says Vincent. “We catch up on each other’s lives.”

TxDOT photo/Marcus Sandifer

# TxDOT ready for season's hurricanes

By Mike Cox  
Editor

Will it be Chantal, Dean, Erin, Felix, Gabrielle, Humberto, Ingrid, Jerry, Karen, Lorenzo, Melissa, Noel, Olga, Pablo, Rebekah, Sebastien, Tanya, Van or Wendy?

With Andrea and Barry already used this year, those are the still-available names from the list the National Weather Service (NWS) developed to differentiate tropical storms or hurricanes that develop in the Atlantic Ocean.

Chances are good Texans will become quite familiar with one or more of those names sometime this summer or fall. In a report released May 22, the NWS says: "The outlook calls for a very high likelihood of an above-normal hurricane season, with 13-17 named storms, 7-10 hurricanes, and 3-5 major hurricanes."

Federal meteorologists see a 75 percent chance of an "above-normal hurricane season" with a 20 percent chance of a "near-normal" season and only a five percent chance of a "below-normal season."

That season officially began June 1, though Aug. 1 marks the start of the peak hurricane season. It continues through November.

Nine days after the NWS hurricane forecast came out, Colorado State University hurricane expert William Gray weighed in with his outlook. He said he expects 17 named storms and nine hurricanes — five of them big-time hurricanes.

Of particular interest to Texas coastal residents, Gray calculates a 49 percent chance of a major hurricane hitting the Gulf coast somewhere between Brownsville and the Florida Panhandle.

Last year, despite dire predictions, only 10 Atlantic storms got big enough to rate names, and only two became major hurricanes. None of



**Evacuees, evident by the hurricane symbol, are one of the ways TxDOT will use to help coastal Texans move inland to safety when a hurricane looms.**

— TxDOT photo / Marc Shepherd

them hit the United States.

So what happened? A rapid and unexpected increase in sea temperature in the Pacific (referred to as the El Niño effect) created a strong wind from the west that figuratively decapitated tropical storms as they developed and blew them back into the Atlantic. This season, the opposite has occurred in the Pacific, creating a La Nina effect that is conducive to severe tropical cyclone development.

While Texas skated last hurricane season, no one with TxDOT has forgotten the summer and early fall of 2005. First came Louisiana and

Mississippi's Hurricane Katrina, with its human impact on this state, followed by Hurricane Rita, which triggered the largest evacuation in world history and resulted in damage to a wide area of Southeast Texas. More than 140 deaths were directly or indirectly attributed to the storm.

"We've come a long way preparedness-wise since 2005," says Scott Alley. With the Maintenance Division, Alley is the department's coordinator for emergency management.

By last hurricane season, TxDOT  
*(continued on pg. 9)*

(continued from pg. 8)

had developed evacuation route maps, a detailed contraflow plan for the Beaumont, Houston-Galveston, Corpus Christi and Valley areas. TxDOT also has a plan in place to operate 17 comfort stations along the evacuation routes and another plan (with the private sector) to cope with problems of fuel availability.

Nine TxDOT districts — Beaumont, Bryan, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, Lufkin, Pharr, San Antonio and Yoakum — gave presentations at the Governor's Division of Emergency Management annual hurricane conference (May 8-10 in Galveston) and the department participated in a two-day statewide hurricane exercise June 4-5.

New this year is a TxDOT Emergency Management page on the Maintenance Division's intranet. Even newer is the TxDOT Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Web page. The site allows districts, divisions and offices to enter their disaster-related commitments, needs or actions so everyone involved in the department's response can have a real-time picture of TxDOT's status during an emergency.

"Probably the biggest message we need to get across to the public and to our own employees is to keep your vehicle's fuel tank topped off throughout hurricane season," Alley says. "If everyone waits until shortly before an evacuation order to fill their vehicles, we're still going to have problems. But if demand remains constant with no severe spikes, we should be OK."

Zane Webb, who heads the TxDOT Maintenance Division, issued a memo May 31 that TxDOT policy requires that all department fuel storage tanks be full as of the first of each month during hurricane season to lessen fuel demand when a storm approaches.

As it did in 2005, the approach and landfall of a major hurricane will have a tremendous impact on TxDOT, Alley says. In the Houston District alone, 700 district employees would be needed to manage a contraflow evacuation, plus 100 employees each from the Fort Worth, Tyler and Waco districts. TxDOT also would operate up to 75 courtesy patrols in the district.

"I hope this time next year we'll be talking about how quiet the summer of 2007 was," Alley says, "but we've got to be ready. And the districts have put in an unbelievable amount of work to get us ready."

# Key lesson from storms: We must be prepared

By **John Barton**  
Beaumont District Engineer



**John Barton**

Hurricane season is here again. It runs from June 1 through Nov. 30 each year. Therefore, it would be wise for all of us to spend some time reviewing our personal preparedness plans for ourselves and our families. Also, check out district procedures for hurricane-preparedness.

The forecast for this year indicates this will be an active hurricane season. Since Hurricane Rita, Texas has spent a great deal of time and resources updating and improving our state's evacuation plans for our coastal regions.

TxDOT has been assigned a large role in managing these evacuations. In our district, we have developed new plans and ideas — including the use of evaculanes — to make the evacuation of southeastern Texas more efficient and timely.

Last year, the governor issued an executive order instructing TxDOT to plan, manage and support future evacuations.

In response, many TxDOT people volunteered to assist in any future evacuations as part of courtesy-patrol units, traffic-control units, comfort-station attendants, phone-bank operators, equipment-convoy drivers, etc. I appreciate all who are willing to do their part to make any future evacuation successful.

The safety of our employees and their families is the most important matter to us. All of us will be allowed a reasonable amount of time off from work in advance of an evacuation to secure our homes and property, and to help our families prepare to evacuate.

Most of us will need to report back to work to manage the evacuation of the public and prepare the way home once the storm passes. On a case-by-case basis, special consideration will be given to our employees who must evacuate with their families because of medical or family limitations.

Depending on the situation that arises, all TxDOT employees may be considered mission-critical and required to assist in an emergency. In the past, citizens of Texas have counted on us when floods, hurricanes, fires, tornados, ice storms, and other disasters have occurred. We stand ready.

*(Editor's note: This article stresses the importance of being ready for a hurricane, or other disaster. It first appeared in the June issue of the Beaumont District newsletter and has been adapted here for the attention of all TxDOT employees.)* ☺

## JUNE 2007

### ■ DISTRICTS

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

**Abilene:** 20 — Tommie J. Brown, Norman J. Herridge, Cindy R. Sparks; 15 — Jesus Cisneros, Darden L. Stokes, Imogene H. Watkins, Terri M. Wolaver; 10 — Theresa B. Conner, Norman L. Hall

**Amarillo:** 20 — Bonnie K. Bass; Billy R. Hester; 5 — Raymond M. Guzman

**Atlanta:** 25 — Ricky L. Bogan, Robert A. Jones; 20 — Clarence Evans, Larry D. Whitworth; 5 — Jason R. Dupree

**Austin:** 30 — Clayton E. Seidel; 25 — Ernie C. Goerlitz; 20 — Thomas B. Brown, Michael B. Camus, Johnny L. Eddleton, Louis C. Hernandez, Mary C. McDaniels, Elba J. Nail, Robert E. Parker, Dale W. Turner Jr.; 15 — Gerald W. Barrett, Joe S. Hennig, Chad A. Nutt; 10 — Jerome M. Boado, John T. Buckley, John H. Dittmar, James T. Evertson, Mary T. Garrett, Robert G. Guydosh, Shelby S. Sultemeier; 5 — Joseph M. Ingracia, Rosa E. Lee, Crisanto Pena Jr.

**Beaumont:** 20 — William J. Duffield Jr., Lloyd E. Pierce; 15 — Henry K. Horn; 10 — Javier P. Salinas

**Brownwood:** 20 — Earla B. Palette; 10 — Jim F. McNutt

**Bryan:** 25 — Donnell Burns; 10 — Jean J. Feng, Joe V. Salvato; 5 — John E. Castro, Sherry K. Stavinoha

**Childress:** 15 — Rickey L. Gonzales, Gene L. Ward; 10 — Curt A. Coop, Carlos I. Lozano, David O. Newbrough, Alfred W. Oneal, Michael F. Williams; 5 — David Martinez

**Corpus Christi:** 20 — Israel Gonzalez; 15 — Humberto V. Ruiz; 10 — Ashraf I. Hafez, Gary P. Janacek, David A. McDermott, Gary L. Pawelek, Richard E. Tuttle Jr., Claro C. Ybarra,

**Dallas:** 25 — Majid Sadjadpour; 20 — Greg P. Austin, Terry W. Bruce, Susan K. Johnson; 15 — Charles A. May, Carlos E. Scott, Patrick A. Walker; 10 — William H. Compton, David A. Estep, Nancy J. Kidd; 5 — Lincoln Allen, Marjorie H. Bentz, Rita J. Farish, Michael D. Ives, Mark W. Kelly, Rodney Skelly

**El Paso:** 30 — Gilbert Jordan; 20 —

Guillermo Garcia, Gerardo Leos; 15 — Rolando E. Hernandez, Carlos C. Mendoza Jr., Armida Sagaribay; 5 — Juan C. Martinez

**Fort Worth:** 30 — Gary J. Gossage; 20 — John S. Gibbs; 15 — Richard G. Schiller Jr., Timothy S. Shuler; 10 — Jeannie M. Dobbs, Joni L. Eastman, Karen L. Schluter; 5 — Marcus B. Broadstock, Eric L. Fitzgerald

**Houston:** 50 — Carol J. Letz; 40 — James E. Williams; 25 — Bradley A. Eubank, Marietta F. Francisco, Anthony P. Garcia, Willie J. Hubbard, James F. Richardson, David N. Rodgers, Charles R. Tompkins; 20 — Paul R. Bartholomew, James W. Koch, James L. Parnell; 15 — Verna Brown Addy, Richard Powell, Larry J. Rosemon, Pius S. Tomdio, Elworth J. Wilcox, Jr; 10 — Brett C. Bowen, Roland Lozano, Rogelio R. Rubico; 5 — Percy L. Ben Jr., Patricia K. Campbell, Patrick G. Gant, Robert L. Horlander Jr., Kenneth D. Townsend

**Laredo:** 5 — Benito Nandin Jr.

**Lubbock:** 20 — Tracey D. Spradling; 15 — Charles E. Frater; 10 — Danny Sanchez;

**Lufkin:** 25 — Dennis R. Cooley, Eddie D. Kennedy; 20 — Hughie Burrell, Garry M. Harrison, Willie J. Wright; 10 — Nancy A. Smith

**Odessa:** 25 — James L. Moore; 20 — Danny G. Webb; 10 — Steven D. Escamilla; 5 — Robert A. Miller

**Paris:** 30 — Van A. Cato, Bobby D. Cornelius; 20 — Leisha L. Hopkins, Larry D. Smith; 10 — Gustavo Escobedo

**Pharr:** 25 — Fernando A. Chapa; 20 — Alejandro A. Munguia; 10 — Melba R. Ramos, Romeo Rosales, Humberto Uresti; 5 — Ricardo R. Bravo, Juan P. Terrazas

**San Angelo:** 35 — Patricia P. Jackson; 25 — Albert V. Acosta, Michael M. Bahm; 20 — Ricky M. Ross, Frank E. Sparks; 15 — Mark W. Halfmann; 10 — Ronald L. Nowlin

**San Antonio:** 20 — Kelly J. Kenner, Daniel J. Reigrut; 10 — Baldomero P. Ollerbidez; 5 — Dale W. Damerau, Jimmy Lozano

**Tyler:** 30 — William R. Gill; 20 — Marlin L. Cooper, Lonnie S. Kincaid, John R. Sigler, Dennis P. Smith, Walter H. Smith; 10 — Jose C. Rodriguez

**Waco:** 20 — Rodney D. Karasek, David Swinson III; 15 — Randy N. Roddy; 5 — Jo A. Miller; also noted: Terry Holt (20 years, September 2006)

**Wichita Falls:** 15 — Linda G. Tamplin; 10 — Bobby S. Watkins; 5 — Jill J. Holmes, William C. Ulbig

**Yoakum:** 10 — Richard D. Canik, David Jimenez

### ■ DIVISIONS

**Aviation:** 15 — David S. Fulton

**Bridge:** 20 — Steven D. Smith; 15 — Walter M. Black; 10 — David A. Mraz; 5 — Amy E. Eskridge, Scott J. Walton

**Business Opportunity Program:** 5 — Desta M. Simon

**Construction:** 20 — David B. Belser, Mary C. Fitzpatrick, Denise V. Maldonado, William M. Pecht; 15 — James M. Barton

**Design:** 30 — Sheila A. Crawley; 15 — Amy J. Ronnfeldt; 5 — Ruben A. Anchondo

**Finance:** 5 — Linda L. Bowman

**General Services:** 5 — Jason E. Hranicky

**Information Systems:** 10 — Mark Wright; 5 — Peggy A. Isaacs, Jeffrey S. Seifert

**Maintenance:** 20 — John T. Pickard, Sandra Rodriguez

**Motor Carrier:** 10 — Michal K. Barrada

**Right of Way:** 5 — Peggy W. Lindemann

**Traffic Operations:** 15 — Cynthia L. Flores

**Transportation Planning & Programming:** 25 — Tammy G. Stone; 20 — Rodney L. Grimes; 10 — Michael D. Wojciechowski

**Travel:** 20 — Benard T. Stafford; 5 — Amy B. Vincent

**Turnpike Authority:** 20 — John S. Breed; 15 — Linda Sexton, Diana E. Vargas

**Vehicle Titles & Registration:** 35 — Stephen W. Gary; 20 — David O. Jaso, Johnny O. Manns

### ■ OFFICES

**Audit:** 25 — Lee H. Stone.

**Administration:** 10 — Shawna C. Russell

**Audit:** 5 — Dennis W. Olson

**General Counsel:** 5 — Kimberly A. Hall

**Public Information:** 15 — Mark E. Cross

**Abilene:** Marlon D. Newberry (26) — **Amarillo:** Frank R. Gilbert (37), Linda D. Reimer (15) — **Bryan:** Lonnie G. Brothers (32) — **Corpus Christi:** Alvin R. Keeney Jr. (25) — **Dallas:** Herbert K. Wilcox (28), Glenda D. Miller (21), John V. Montoya (5) — **Fort Worth:** John L. Sharpe (35) — **Houston:** Minnie H. Kaatz (28) Ronald J. Bush (7) — **Information Systems:** Byron J. Miller (25) Barbara L. Ryon (20) — **Odessa:** Gonzalo C. Ulate (20) Henry C. Monroe (11) — **Pharr:** Kenneth A. Todd (20) — **San Antonio:** Dale R. Stein Jr. (27) — **Tyler:** Joe R. Moore (28) — **Vehicle Titles & Registration:** Frances E. Moon (25) — **Yoakum:** James S. Heard (26)

## In Memoriam

### Austin District

Epimenio Urrutia Sr.  
maintenance  
retired August 1995  
died May 21, 2007

### Corpus Christi District

Natividad Ramos  
maintenance  
retired October 1983  
died April 20, 2007

### Fort Worth District

Felton Phillips  
right-of-way agent  
retired 1986  
died May 26, 2007

Frank Robinson  
motor-carrier permit supervisor  
retired 1990  
died June 25, 2007

### Laredo District

Vidal S. Nevarez  
maintenance technician  
retired February 1977  
died May 31, 2007

### Yoakum District

Joseph Laufer  
retired May 1987  
died May 18, 2007

## Letter from the editor

(continued from pg. 3)

James E. (Pa) Ferguson happened to have been from Holland, as in Holland, Texas. To lay coincidence upon coincidence, Ferguson also happened to own property near Highway 2 as it passed through the Holland-Sparks area.

“Did Governor Ferguson ‘see to it that the main highway ran through Holland and Sparks where he owned property? I think so!” Ivicic wrote in a family history book he has compiled.

Alas, due to other “coincidences”

that happened during Ferguson’s administration, the Texas Senate voted to remove him from office in the late summer of 1917. By the mid-1930s, Highway 2 had become decidedly less dog-legged and extended from Austin to Georgetown to Belton. The old segment became Highway 2-B, a roadway later redesignated as SH 95.

Some of the bridges on SH 95, Ivicic continued, were built back in the early 1920s and continue to do their job to this day. ☺

### Renewal notice / No. 2

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.

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## Calendar

### 2007

#### 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 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), ABL, CST

#### August

- 1 PMIS Northwest Region Pre-Work Mtg, ABL, CST
- 1-2 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), 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

- 3 Labor Day\*
- 13 Rosh Hashanah\*\*\*
- 14 Rosh Hashanah\*\*\*
- 22 Yom Kippur
- 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
- 11 Veterans Day
- 15 Commission Meeting, Austin
- 22 Thanksgiving\*
- 23 Day after Thanksgiving\*
- 28 Statewide Construction & Materials Meeting, Austin, CST

#### December

- 5 Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 13 Commission Meeting, Austin
- 24 Christmas Eve Day\*
- 25 Christmas Day\*
- 26 Day after Christmas\*

- \* = 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 mystery picture was taken during the 1950s. One clue to the the location is a drive-in theater that may no longer exist. There are residences near a rail crossing and what appears to be a multi-story building in the background. If you have an idea where this photo was taken, please contact Anne Cook at (512) 486-5838 or e-mail her at [acook@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:acook@dot.state.tx.us).



**He got it** — Brian Rivers, right-of-way agent in the Tyler District, identified this photo from the May issue. He says the view looks west on State Highway 6 in Eastland. Phyllis Thompson, planning assistant in Forth Worth, merits honorable mention as she identified the photo a scant 20 minutes after Rivers did. Looking closely, viewers can see the Eastland courthouse a few blocks toward the background. ⭐

## Looking Back...

**Item:** A snappy gust of wind in a turbulent spring sky put the Department in the energy-production business when the Wichita Falls District brought its new wind-powered generator on line in mid-May.

**Item:** A crew from the NBC Today Show filmed some of the special mowing procedures of the Travis County (South) Maintenance Section as part of a special segment on wildflowers. NBC could not ignore what is probably the largest wildflower garden in the nation, the right of way of the Texas highway system.

— from *Transportation News*,  
Texas Dept. of Highways & Public Transportation, June 1982



125 E. 11th St.  
Austin, Texas 78701

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