

T TRANSPORTATION NEWS

August 2003

Volume 28 Number 10

An Eye on the Coast

Lighthouses
Hurricanes
Bridges
Ferries
Piers



ROBERT H. DEDMAN

MARINE LAW
STOP MOTOR
SET BRAKE
NO SMOCKING

ROBERT H. DEDMAN
GALVESTON, TX.

On the cover:

The Robert H. Dedman prepares to make another trip from Galveston to Port Bolivar.

TxDOT photo by Geoff Appold

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Straight Talk 

Adjusting to a tight economy

by **Mike Behrens**

Executive Director

Legislation passed during the 78th legislative session requires TxDOT — and all state agencies with at least 500 employees — to employ no more than one human resources professional for every 85 staff members. For TxDOT, that's a reduction of 80 jobs by December 31, held by people who have dedicated themselves to taking care of the rest of us. We are more than concerned about our fellow employees and are doing something about it.

We are putting a tremendous amount of time and energy into taking care of our co-workers while meeting the requirements of HB 3442. Despite a loss of positions, TxDOT is in the process of identifying vacancies that these employees can apply for. TxDOT is a family and a family takes care of — and does everything to hold onto — its own. We will watch out for the people who have been taking care of us for all these years.

All in all, I am hopeful that we'll place every single displaced employee in a new job before December 31. It won't be the same, of course. These professionals, who have greeted us on our first day of work, counseled us on our benefits, trained us to perform our jobs better, will enter a pool of jobs that don't necessarily involve their primary area of expertise. Their work lives — and therefore their lives in general — will be unsettled, unfamiliar and full of change that no one expected. But we must implement this new law. Our counterparts throughout state government are also making tough choices that have resulted in job loss.

We want all TxDOT employees to know how much we appreciate their service to the state of Texas. Right now, though, we especially target those potentially displaced workers from our human resources staffs with our thoughts that they will continue as our fellow TxDOT employees. ♻️

“TxDOT is a family and a family takes care of — and does everything to hold onto — its own. We will watch out for the people who have been taking care of us for all these years.”

Claudette sends message: Category 1 is still a hurricane

by Mike Cox
Editor

The National Weather Service (NWS) classified Hurricane Claudette as a Category 1 storm.

But TxDOT employees along the middle coast, as well as tens of thousands of other Texans, discovered the hard way that Claudette apparently didn't get that memo about being a minimal hurricane.

On the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, Category 1 storms do "no real damage to building structures." Damage is supposedly to be primarily to unanchored mobile homes, trees and poorly constructed signs.

But the state's Division of Emergency Management reports that three out of four homes in Port Lavaca were damaged by the July 14 storm, along with 70 per cent of the town's businesses. Extensive damage

also occurred in Victoria.

With wind gusts up to 104 miles an hour, Claudette left damage more akin to a mild Category 2 storm, which the NWS says is marked by torn roofs and blown-out doors and windows.

The hurricane claimed two lives and injured six people. Eighteen counties were affected by the storm, and Gov. Rick Perry sought a presidential disaster declaration.

From TxDOT's standpoint, the swing bridge at Sargent in Matagorda County sustained some

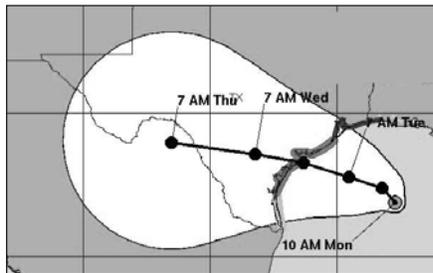
damage. Additionally, a segment of U.S. 87 in Galveston County was washed out by the surge tide associated with the storm.

During the storm, ferry operations in Galveston and Port Aransas were suspended because of high tides.

As soon after the storm's Port O'Connor landfall that it was considered safe to do so, TxDOT maintenance crews began clearing debris from roadways, replacing traffic signs and fixing washouts.

In Austin, a representative of the Maintenance Division was present in the state's Emergency Operations Center during the time of its around-the-clock activation.

Jack Colley, state coordinator for the emergency management division, summed up the storm when he told a reporter: "There's nothing minimal about Claudette." ★



Letter from the editor

In case you snoozed through middle school geography class, Texas has the third longest coast line in the nation.

From an historical perspective, the coast was the key ingredient in Texas' first people-moving system — the seagoing vessels that brought Spanish and French explorers and later the first settlers.

Until good roads and railroads developed, the natural harbors along the coast were the gateways to Texas.

The coast is still vital to Texas transportation. The only passengers these days are folks alighting from cruise ships, but Texas ports are major commercial hubs. Extending inland from those ports, TxDOT maintains a system of first-class highways.

This issue focuses on our coast,

from bridge warning systems in the Pharr District to removal of an old bridge in the Beaumont District. We can't cover every coastal matter affecting TxDOT in just 16 pages, but we've tried to get as much in as possible, including a look at the impact of Hurricane Claudette. Our thanks to everyone with TxDOT who helped us out.

★ ★ ★

One of the nice things about being a gray-headed Baby Boomer is the happy memory of having three whole months of summer between grades. Now, of course, many Texas school children return to the classroom during August.

We know you would never drive fast through a school zone or pass a stopped school bus, but if you have a young driver in your family, now's a good time to remind them of

those school-safety considerations.

★ ★ ★

A lot of great lines have jumped from movies into the popular vernacular over the years, including this classic from Struther Martin in "Cool Hand Luke": "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

Few things are more important than good communication. In recognition of that, and also to recognize good communicators, TxDOT will be presenting two new communications awards at the Short Course this October. Entry details will be circulated soon. And unlike "Cool Hand Luke" Paul Newman, you don't have to eat 50 boiled eggs to qualify. (If this doesn't ring a bell, rent the movie.)

Keep up the communication.

— Mike Cox



EXCELLENCE GARNERS AWARDS

TxDOT recently received several Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) awards from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

The Traffic Operations Division received four awards recognizing the Click It or Ticket campaign, the Police Everywhere TV public-service announcement, the Violation Citation radio spot, and the Not Buckling Up Can Cost You brochure.

"Tag Team," produced by the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, was recognized as best newsletter.

The Motor Vehicle Division received a PACE award for the Lemon Law brochure.

The PACE award recognizes excellence in public relations, public affairs and consumer education among motor vehicle, law enforcement, and traffic safety agencies across North America.

PARIS' FREEMAN TO RETIRE

James G. Freeman will retire as district engineer for the Paris District effective Aug. 31, after nearly 36 years of department service. Freeman has been district engineer since September 1999.

Freeman is noted for emphasizing ride quality and for improving pavement conditions in the nine-county district.

He began his TxDOT career in 1967 as a summer hire in the Brownwood District.

BEAUMONT ENGINEER TO RETIRE

Walter O. Crook will retire as district engineer for the Beaumont District effective Aug. 31, after nearly 35 years of department service. Crook has been district engineer since October 1993.

Crook's accomplishments include work on the Veterans Memorial

Bridge over the Neches River, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway in Beaumont, and more than \$220 million in reconstruction projects along Interstate 10. He guided the planning and reestablishment of the Port Arthur Transit System in 1979, and he chaired the TxDOT Hurricane Evacuation Task Force and the Pavement Research Committee.

Crook began his career with the Beaumont District in 1968 as a summer hire in the North Jefferson County residency.

TRAWEEK SET TO RETIRE

Lonny G. Traweek will retire as district engineer for the Bryan District effective Aug. 31, after nearly 33 years of department service. Traweek has served as district engineer since 1992.

He began his TxDOT career in 1970 as an engineering assistant in the Dallas District design office. During his tenure there, Traweek was responsible for eight miles of the reconstruction of the North Central Expressway, one of the most complicated projects in the state.

DALLAS CHIEF TO RETIRE

Jay R. Nelson will retire as district engineer for the Dallas District effective Aug. 31, after three decades of service with TxDOT. Nelson has been in the Dallas post since September 1995. He also had served as Paris district engineer, being named to that post in 1993.

Nelson began his TxDOT career in 1973 as an engineering assistant in the Dallas District. He spent much of his early career assessing effects on the environment and the community of projects such as new sections of Interstate 20 and Texas 121. Nelson also prepared the first master transportation plan for the Dallas District.

Born in Hays, Kansas, Nelson

graduated with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 1973. He was certified as a professional engineer in 1977.

GSD HEAD TO RETIRE

Lawrence (Larry) J. Zatopek will retire as director of the General Services Division effective Aug. 31, after nearly 35 years of department service. He became division director in October 1993.

Zatopek oversaw the reorganization of department warehouse operations, decreasing costs and inventory while increasing efficiency. His clean air initiatives have resulted in TxDOT having the largest alternative-fuel vehicle fleet in Texas. In FY 2001, TxDOT saved \$1.7 million in reproduction costs through a GSD program posting highway and maintenance plans online.

Zatopek began his TxDOT career in 1966 as a summer employee with the San Antonio District.

EL PASO WINS SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

With temperatures hitting the high 90s, TxDOT employees and family members participated in the 15th annual statewide TxDOT Softball Tournament held June 21 in Austin.

In the men's division, defending champion Carrizo Springs Diablos (Laredo District) faced a tough Texas Thunder (Houston District), last year's runner-up, being forced into an "if" game. The Diablos prevailed, 20-7, to win the championship. The Fort Worth Longhorns placed third.

In the co-rec division, defending champion Quality Assurers (Construction Division) beat Denton Maintenance (Dallas District), 14-13, in the championship game.

Ramon Rodriguez, lab material and process inspector in the Laredo

■ See **ROUNDUP**, Page 7

Burton Clifton: 54 years

Most-tenured employee retires

by **Michael Peters**
Fort Worth District

In the summer of 1947, a dark-haired, mild-mannered man, gleaming with the confidence of youth, entered the Lubbock District engineering offices of the Texas Highway Department to work as a draftsman.

A Texas Tech civil engineering student and an engineer-soldier only recently back from World War II after serving in France, Germany, Japan and the Philippines, Burton Clifton soon felt at home working with highway engineers. It was a dream fulfilled for a budding highway enthusiast.

The Texas Highway Department was three decades old then. Clifton's paycheck was 85 cents an hour, barely making ends meet for a newly married college student from Fort Worth.

"Our son was born early in 1948 while I was still in college on Uncle Sam's GI bill," recalls Clifton.

More than 54 years later on Aug. 29, a white-haired, 77-year-old Clifton will roll up his last set of highway plans and retire from the Texas Department of Transportation's Fort Worth District as advanced planning director.

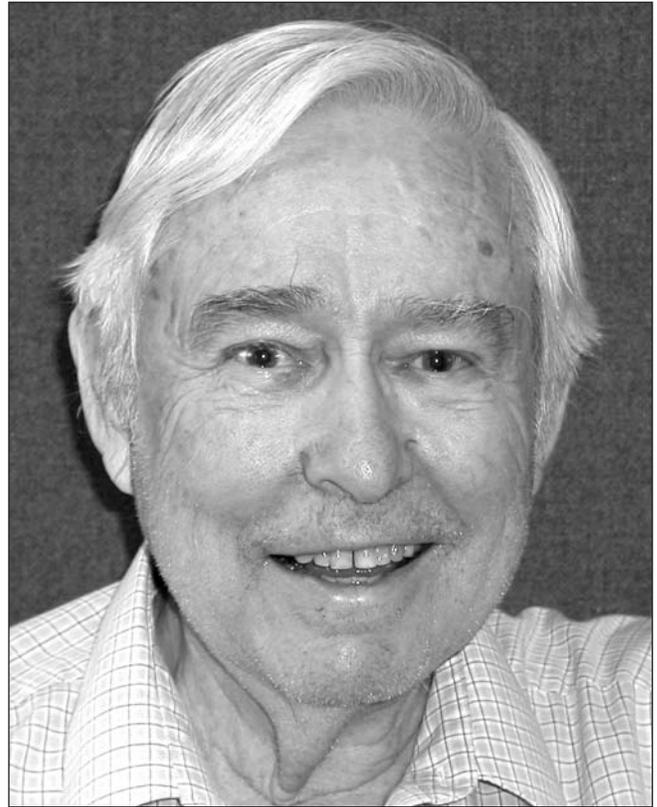
Over the years, he has built or helped build practically every roadway in Tarrant County. Most notable is his work on the geometric design of all the district's interstate projects.

Today, these highways run across the Fort Worth Metroplex, a credit to Clifton and the design of the interchanges that connect them. The new I-30/I-35W interchange stands as the district's greatest design.

"The Buck Rogers comic strips showed highway bridges shooting out across the sky," remarks Clifton of the science fiction comic strip he read as a youth. "The presence of those bridges seems very much like the bridges in our downtown Mixmaster."

The I-30/I-35W interchange came to fruition in 2003 after years of planning. As the project's final ramps are being opened, Clifton has made the decision to retire from TxDOT.

"His impact on the Fort Worth District is without measure," says TxDOT Deputy Executive Director Steve Simmons, who served as district engineer in



Burton Clifton

TxDOT photo / Michael Peters

Fort Worth from 1998 to 2001. "Nearly every roadway carries his mark."

In recent years, Clifton has taken on a more prominent role in mentoring the district's young engineers, leaving behind his legacy and passing on the skill, ability and knowledge of his tenure.

Fort Worth District Engineer Maribel Chavez says, "He has the wisdom of a hundred engineers — many who have come and gone in the department. He has been a mentor to all of us, and a valuable asset to the department."

After devoting the better part of his life to new and reconstructed highways, Clifton believes TxDOT needs alternatives to those methods. "We have to get more of us into fewer vehicles," he says. "HOV lanes are steps that way. Commuter rail works in Chicago, and subways work in New York, but we have a long way to go in Texas."

A white 1965 Chevrolet Malibu station wagon recently restored now sits in Clifton's parking spot, awaiting its final drive out of the gates of the district complex. Its owner is preparing for a trip over the near horizon with Dorothy, his wife of 56 years. Clifton has dedicated his life and career to serving members of the traveling public, and now he will become one of them. ✪

Port Aransas ferry system sees improvements

by Frances Garza
Corpus Christi District

It's summer in Port Aransas and only the dolphins are making more trips across the Corpus Christi Ship Channel than TxDOT's ferryboats.

During peak hours, especially during holidays and the summer months, some travelers may be required to wait their turn while the ferry makes the trip back and forth across the quarter-mile channel. This is a ride that takes from three to 10 minutes, depending on the weather and the traffic in the channel. The wait in line to board the ferry, however, can sometimes be as long as an hour.

In the spring and summer of 2001, due to excessive delays at the State Highway 361 intersection with the Corpus Christi Ship Channel, travelers expressed frustration as they waited in lines for ferry boarding. TxDOT developed plans to meet the demands of the public. "Our objectives were to achieve safe and more efficient service, improve our public image, and communicate

effectively with the community and traveling public," says Howard Gillespie, ferry operations manager.

Short-term changes were made to improve service, including expanded boat schedules, modified loading procedures, installation of a digital message sign to display the waiting time in line, upgrades of ramps and boat maintenance schedules. TxDOT worked closely with the U. S. Coast Guard to improve safety and maintenance. As a result, complaints about the wait in line to board the ferryboats were reduced.

A park-and-walk program was started during Spring Break 2003. The program allows people to park their cars on the Harbor Island side. People walk onto the ferryboats and ride across the channel to Port Aransas. This cuts down on the waiting time to board the ferry. The program was a success, and TxDOT officials hope participation next year will increase with the improvements in process now. These include landscaping, paved parking, lighting and covered areas.

The Port Aransas Ferry System provides service seven days a week. The ride connects Mustang Island and Port Aransas with the mainland via Aransas Pass.

Ferry service becomes critical when a hurricane threatens. "The ferryboats are the primary means of evacuation off the island for Port Aransas residents," says Gillespie, "During an evacuation, ferryboat trips are continued until high winds and tides make their mission unsafe."

Six ferryboats are now in service. The number in operation at any given time depends on demand. All are capable of carrying up to 20 regular passenger vehicles per trip. These ferryboats are finding their passenger lists increasing each year. In 1961, when three ferryboats were used, 252,224 vehicles made the trip across the channel. A total of 2.2 million vehicles and 25,474 pedestrians made the trip in 2002. Operation of the Port Aransas Ferry System in FY 2003 will be performed within an annual budget of \$2.4 million. ☆



Doing the Wave

Battered by waves and wind from Hurricane Claudette on July 14, the Port Aransas ferry crosses the channel on its last trip during the storm. The ferryboats are the primary means of evacuation off the island for Port Aransas residents. Ferry operations resumed later in the day when calmer weather prevailed.

TxDOT photo / Capt. Larry Stimson

Old Matagorda lighthouse gets new look

by **Pearlie Bushong**
Yoakum District

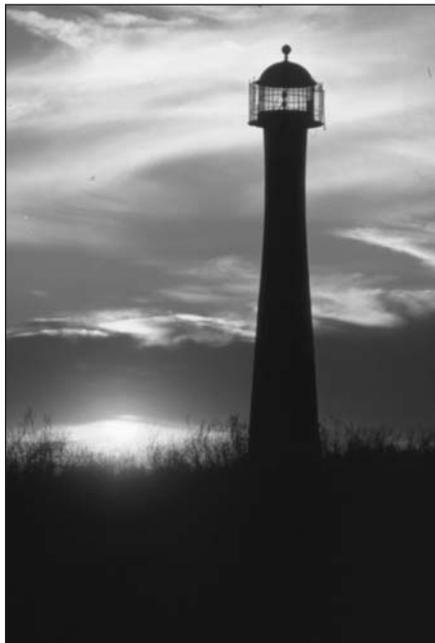
Turn time back to Dec. 21, 1852, on Matagorda Island, where atop the lighthouse you see the lantern, perched on the new 55-foot cast-iron tower, lit for the first time.

You are at the entrance to Cavallo Pass, where Matagorda Bay connects with the Gulf of Mexico. This pass is vital to the local economy as a major point of entry for cotton, cattle, molasses, lumber, potatoes, and corn that pass to the interior of Texas.

In 1857, the lighthouse was extended 24 feet higher. Two years later, new equipment provided more light for ships seeking the bay.

During the Civil War, Confederate soldiers tried to destroy the lighthouse to keep it from falling into Union hands. The Confederates were unable to completely do away with the tower but they did break several of its cast iron plates. They removed the lens — the precision-ground glass that enabled the lighthouse to throw a long beam — and buried it in the sand.

After the war, the U.S. govern-



Matagorda lighthouse

TxDOT photo

ment ordered soldiers to disassemble the tower and move the large cast iron pieces farther inland to higher ground.

By Sept. 1, 1873, the lighthouse was back in service with a new foundation and a more powerful Fresnel lens. The flashing beam of

light could be seen 15 miles out to sea every 90 seconds. In 1956, commercial electric power replaced the kerosene lamps. Twenty-one years later, the Coast Guard removed the old lens and installed a modern — albeit less powerful — lens.

In 1995, the lighthouse ceased its long life as a navigational aid along the Texas coast. Mother Nature and the sea air continued to take their toll on the tower and the lighthouse keepers' cottages. Soon, the only things left at the site were the black cast iron tower and the little cemetery near it with the graves of former keepers and their families. Many of the grave markers have been destroyed by weather over the years.

Texans will regain access to this historical resource after completion this summer of an \$800,000 restoration. The lighthouse, in the National Register of Historic Places and recognized by the Texas Historical Commission, will return to its 1852 self thanks to funding from the federal government and Calhoun County.

The TxDOT enhancement proj-

■ See **LIGHTHOUSE**, Page 15

TxDOT Roundup



Continued from Page 4

District, was named the men's division most valuable player. (MVP) **David Belser**, special projects coordinator at Construction Division's Materials and Pavements section, of the Quality Assurers was MVP for the co-rec division.

AWARDS HAIL FOUR PROJECTS

Four highway construction projects have been selected as winners of Texas Quality Initiative achievement awards to be presented at the September meeting in Austin of the Associated General Contractors. Categories and winning projects

include:

Teamwork category - U.S. 287/Interstate 44 elevated freeway, Wichita Falls District; contractor: Austin Bridge and Road LLP

Quality category (gold level) - U.S. 83 expressway (Palmview), Pharr District; contractor: Williams Brothers Construction; designer: TEDSI Infrastructure Group

Quality category (silver level) - Frankford Avenue and North Loop 289, Lubbock District; contractor: Granite Construction

Innovation category - U.S. 59 Southwest Freeway (Houston Gateway), Houston District; con-

tractor: Williams Brothers Construction. This project has been nominated to be recognized under the National Partnership for Highway Quality program.

SALARY INFO

The TxDOT Human Resources Division reports that \$2,999.83 is the average monthly salary of TxDOT employees.

COVERS A LOT OF GROUND

The "Mixmaster" project in Fort Worth consists of 2.1 million square feet of bridge deck (48.6 acres), says the Fort Worth Star Telegram. ★

TxDOT Ferry Tales

by **Buddy Allison**
Public Information Office

For some, it's a free boat ride in a tropical vacationland with entertainment provided by leaping dolphin and a flock of seagulls snatching bread from extended hands. For others, it's a 2.7-mile segment of State Highway 87 and part of the commute between Galveston Island and Port Bolivar. To 120 Houston District TxDOT employees, the Galveston-Bolivar ferry operation is their job.

The conditions are often challenging and, sometimes, dangerous. The ferry crosses the Houston Ship Channel, one of the busiest waterways in the world. The channel carries more than 7,000 ships a year to the Port of Houston, the largest inland port in the United States, in addition to thousands more commercial and recreational boats. Tides can be treacherous and the weather can be Texas-unpredictable. Despite these challenges, TxDOT's captains move more than 8 million people a year on passages averaging less than 20 minutes.

Galveston ferry facts

- It's free, and has been since 1949. Before that, 25 cents was charged to reduce traffic congestion.
- The state of Texas has operated the ferry since 1934. Before that, it was operated by Galveston County and private enterprise.
- The life span of a ferry is about 30 years.
- The Galveston fleet burns about 1.7 million gallons of diesel fuel a year. TxDOT recently started using ultra-low-sulfur fuel to help reduce pollution.

The Galveston-based fleet includes five vessels. Each boat is approximately 265 feet long, 65 feet wide and can carry about 70 vehicles and 500 passengers, or eight 18-wheelers.

The oldest boat, christened in April 1977, is powered by two 1,500-horsepower diesel engines with traditional propeller and rudder systems. The other boats in the Galveston fleet are diesel-powered, but use Voith-Schneider drives, giving the operators greater maneuverability, including sideways operation, an important safety feature.

THE PEOPLE

Capt. Bill Mallini heads up the operation. He was 19 years old when he joined TxDOT as an entry-level deckhand. In 13 years he worked his way up to captain, assistant operations manager and, in January 2000, manager of ferry operations. Mallini credits his career successes to hard work, on-the-job training and the desire to improve.

Wayne Welsh, assistant ferry operations manager, has been with TxDOT for just over 16 years. A water-bottle barometer is mounted to the wall over his desk, right beside some photographs of water spouts taken from the control tower. Both serve as constant reminders that weather is an ever-present factor in the operations he helps manage. Welsh has a background in marine electronics and spent his early TxDOT days servicing radars and radios for the ferries.

Tower communications coordinator lead worker **Jackie Bertolino** spends his working hours in a 6-by-10 foot room with a 360-degree view. The view includes a view of Ferry Road, part of SH 87. When traffic builds, Bertolino calls the senior cap-

tain on duty, who in turn calls another boat into service. Bertolino spent eight years working on the boats before moving to the communications tower 10 years ago.

Bertolino recounts how in June, a prospective passenger stopped at the pay phone just below Bertolino's tower to call the Galveston police. The man reported that he was about to commit suicide by jumping off the boat. At the same time, a Galveston police officer was about to begin his shift controlling traffic at the ferry landing. When the police dispatcher requested assistance with the suicide threat, the officer simply walked to the pay phone and took the man into custody. Says Bertolino, "You just never know what's going to happen — it could be anything."

John Shaw was a highway maintenance worker in Vega, Texas, for a year when he learned about the TxDOT-sponsored midshipman training program that changed his life forever. He applied and four years later became Capt. John Shaw.

It's easy to see that Shaw enjoys his work. In the channel traffic, he's calm and calculating, watching traffic for any potential problems. At the landing, he keeps an eye on the traffic and passengers, as well as his crew. When everything looks to be right, he takes the walk to the pilothouse at the other end of the ferry and activates the controls. The ferries are double-ended and are always driven forward.

Shaw chuckles at some of the incidents he's seen on the boats over the years. One memorable event occurred shortly after Galveston banned drinking on the beaches. "A car came onto the ferry, and the folks had been drinking and ran right smooth into

■ See Page 9



No. 1 Deckhand Larry Rosemon keeps an eye on traffic while Capt. John Shaw guides a TxDOT ferry across the Houston Ship Channel. Inset: Capt. Bill Mallini, left, talks with Jackie Bertolino in the communications tower.

TxDOT photos / Geoff Appold, Travel Division

Continued from Page 8

the deckhouse," he recalls. "It didn't damage the boat, but broke the windshield and messed the car up pretty bad. They weren't going fast, but they were totally out of it."

What he likes least about his job is fog. Passengers still have to move between Port Bolivar and Galveston. That's when the rotating antennae of the radar units earn their keep. "I just hate it," Shaw says. "You can't see a thing and have to keep your head stuck in that little radar screen watching for blips the whole trip." He adds that he has had pleasure boats follow him to within sight of land during the fog.

In an online article about boating safety in Galveston Bay, pleasure boater Jeanne Hurr writes, that on one particular trip with her husband, dense fog set in and they became unsure of their position. Hurr writes, "Finally...we saw the Bolivar ferries crossing in the distance. Normally, the ferries are a hazard to be avoided. I have never loved the ferries so much! We traveled up to where we saw these

boats, and followed them in."

The No. 2 member of Shaw's crew is No. 1 deckhand **Larry Rosemon**. He is responsible for the other deckhands of his crew and oversees the loading and unloading of the boat. As a captain-in-training, he gets to hang out in the pilothouse with Shaw while he accumulates sea time and drives the vessel at least two trips a day.

Allen Decker is the engineering and maintenance supervisor. He came on board 20 years ago with a chief engineer's license and a resume of off-shore engineering experience. His crew varies in size between 10 and 20 people — it's their charge to keep the boats running. Over the winter months, beginning after Labor Day weekend, three of the five-boat fleet will receive major servicing. By spring break the cycle is complete.

THE SCHEDULE

The Galveston-Bolivar ferries operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every week. Only the most unusual circumstances get in the way of that schedule. The slow time is late

night and early morning, midnight to 5 a.m., when only one ferry runs hourly. At 5:30 a.m., a second boat goes into service and an hour later the third goes to work. The fourth and fifth boats are put into service as traffic builds, and at the call of the senior captain on duty. The busiest months are June, July and August.

HURRICANE SEASON

During hurricane season, Mallini and Welsh keep a vigilant eye on the weather map. The ferries are part of the primary evacuation route from the Bolivar peninsula, and the service is critical to its residents. If a tropical weather system looks like it might affect the Texas coast, things start changing at the ferry landings. Crews are assigned to pick up loose materials around the yard and schedules are re-arranged.

If weather conditions deteriorate, the ferries work in earnest to get as many people off Bolivar as possible. They will keep at it until the winds get too high, somewhere over 50 mph,

■ See TxDOT ferries, Page 10

One that got away — old TxDOT causeway burns

by Mike Cox
Editor

You've been standing on the pier for hours, feeding the hardhead catfish shrimp after shrimp. But you haven't had a single bite from what you're really trying to catch — speckled trout.

Then you notice the water around the pier's downward-tilted lights seems to have come to life. The shrimp have moved in, and so have the trout. With your next cast, your rod bends and you've got dinner on the line. Sometimes, if you're fishing with a double jig, you bring in two trout at a time.

This goes on for a while until the trout move on. Then it's back to the hardheads.

Night fishing along the Texas coast is great, but don't make any plans to visit the Lighthouse fishing pier at Port Lavaca. Formerly the TxDOT-built causeway that carried State Highway 35 over Lavaca Bay in the Yoakum District, it once was the longest fishing pier in Texas. But lightning caused a fire in 1999 that destroyed 400 feet of the struc-

ture, and a fire of undetermined origin this year burned another big chunk of the causeway-turned-fishing pier to the waterline on May 31.

Built in 1930-31, the causeway connected Point Comfort with Port Lavaca. The present concrete causeway was opened in 1962. The 11,902-foot span, the second longest in Texas, would have opened sooner, but Hurricane Carla in 1961 moved a portion of the bridge's superstructure. The beams and deck on the Point Comfort side of the bridge had to be repaired and moved before the causeway could be traversed.

Carla was not the first hurricane to have an impact on travel across Lavaca Bay. According to the Yoakum District's Gerald Freytag, an unnamed hurricane resulted in considerable damage to the wooden causeway in 1942.

Twenty years later, with the new bridge opened, the mid-section of the old wooden causeway was taken out to allow for nautical traffic. The Port Lavaca end was transformed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife

Department into a lighted fishing pier that quickly became one of Port Lavaca's biggest attractions.

The state ran the pier until 1991, when it agreed to lease the facility to the city for a dollar a year. Eleven years later, Parks and Wildlife deeded the old causeway to Port Lavaca. The agency also offered a grant to spiff it up. With additional grant funds from other sources, the city had \$430,000 earmarked for the renovation.

But with some 350 feet of the creosote-soaked timber destroyed in the latest fire, the future of the old causeway is in doubt.

Options now under consideration range from tearing all of the old structure down and starting over, to various plans for using what remains. The biggest obstacle is money. Even before the fire, the city had an estimate that it could cost \$1 million to \$4 million to renovate the fishing pier.

"There's a lot of history there and we have to consider that," Port Lavaca City Manager Gary Broz told the Port Lavaca Wave, "but we also have to consider economy." 🌟

TxDOT ferries play important role in coastal transportation

Continued from Page 9

or the tides flood SH 87. When the ferries can no longer operate, the crews secure the boats in their docks, shut down the landing area and retreat to the nearby University of Texas Medical Branch to wait out the storm.

On July 14, Hurricane Claudette struck the Texas coast near Port O'Conner. Its effects dominated the day in Galveston with flooded roads and high winds shutting down ferry operations for about five hours.

SAFETY

Safety Specialist Joe Lindsey spent 24 years with the Coast Guard before joining TxDOT seven years ago. His duties include overseeing repairs to the landings, making certain the boats are

safe and throwing dummies overboard. At least quarterly, usually more often, the crews practice man-overboard drills by throwing a dummy over the side and rescuing it under varying conditions. That's just one of the many behind-the-scenes activities taking place to make the 2.7-mile trip as safe as possible. Another example is the weekly firefighting training the crews undergo. At least two members of every crew are trained and certified by Texas A&M University as firefighters.

The 8 million passengers a year usually don't see much of the operation beyond the boats and the deckhands that wave them on and off. But they are there, vigilant in their training and proficient in their jobs. 🌟

Ferry names and colors

- The oldest boat in the Galveston-Bolivar ferry fleet is named the *Gibb Gilchrist*, honoring the two-time state highway engineer.
- The newer boats are named for former Texas transportation commissioners. The boats' trim colors honor their namesakes' alma maters.
- The *R.C. Lanier* is burnt orange for the University of Texas at Austin.
- The *D.C. Greer* is maroon for Texas A&M University.
- The *Ray Stoker Jr.* is green and gold for Baylor University.
- The *R. H. Dedman* is red and blue for Southern Methodist University.

Early Warning System installed at Queen Isabella Causeway

by **Judy Curtis**
Managing Editor

A first-of-its-kind system to detect a bridge collapse will soon be in place to alert motorists on the Queen Isabella Causeway to a possible span collapse ahead.

The move by TxDOT comes nearly two years after a towboat pushing four barges hit the causeway, collapsing portions of the bridge into the waters of the Laguna Madre. Eight people died in the September 2001 tragedy.

"We want the people who use this crucial link to have confidence in their public infrastructure and all our bridges, knowing that we put safety first," says Mark Bloschock, special projects manager in the Bridge Division. Bloschock and a team including James Mercier and

Jim Pitzer designed the safety system after conferring with Florida transportation officials along with vendors and safety experts from the U.S. and Great Britain.

Continuous fiber-optic cables attached along the length of the 2.5-mile bridge will become severed if one or more of the bridge's spans collapse. When that happens, a computer system activates a series of 47 flashing red lights spaced 500 feet apart. At the same time, signs in English and Spanish tell motorists heading toward a problem area to stop driving immediately. Railroad signal arms prevent traffic from proceeding onto the causeway. Meanwhile, the system pages TxDOT and emergency personnel.

"We hope that the system never has a chance to come on," says Arnold

Cortez, area engineer in the Pharr District. "But if it does, we are ready with safeguards in place to protect motorists." The warning system is scheduled to be in place this month.

To add even more safety to the causeway — and to drivers — TxDOT is launching a \$5.8 million pier-protection project. Some 20 concrete bulkheads, east and west of the intracoastal canal and on the south side of the causeway, will act as buffers against a collision by a barge or other vessel. The project is slated for completion by June 2004.

"With all of these measures," says Cortez, "TxDOT continues to fulfill its role of assuring the safety of all Texans. Motorists crossing the Queen Isabella Causeway know that they can travel on that bridge with confidence." ☆

Summer enrollment for employee benefits ends in August

Summer enrollment 2003 is under way. If you have any changes to make to your employment benefits, you have until Aug. 22 to complete them.

Some of the key changes include:

- The calendar year out-of-pocket co-insurance maximums (not including co-payments) for Health Select will increase Sept. 1, 2003 from \$500 to \$1,000 per person. For non-network, the co-insurance maximum will rise from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per person. The out of area co-insurance increases from \$800 to \$1,000 per person.
- Current HealthSelect users will now have to satisfy the \$1,000 co-insurance maximum by Dec. 31 before the plan will pay 100 percent of co-insurance costs. Non-network users who have already met the original \$1,500 co-insurance maximum will now have to meet an additional \$1,500 by Dec. 31.
- On Jan. 1, 2004, the co-insurance maximum for the calendar year 2004 will be \$1,000 for network and out-of-area coverage, and \$3,000 for non-network coverage.
- Primary care physician co-payments are \$20 for Health Select and \$30 for HMOs. Specialist co-pays for HealthSelect is now \$30; for HMO's, it is \$40.
- There will be a \$50 deductible on prescription drugs for each covered person, effective Sept. 1, 2003.

■ Hospital emergency room co-payments are \$100 for HealthSelect and HMOs.

■ HealthSelect co-insurance has also changed: in network, it's 80 percent reimbursement. For non-network, reimbursement totals 60 percent; and for out-of-area, reimbursement is 70 percent. HMOs are reimbursed at 100 percent.

Along with all these increases in health care comes another splash of economic reality: part-time employees will pay more for their insurance premiums. In the past, people working more than 20 hours but fewer than 40 hours a week received the same break on insurance premiums as full-time employees. New laws will reclassify some part-time employees, who will be paying a greater share of their health premiums. For instance, a full-time employee pays nothing for his health care premiums; a part-time worker will pay between \$129 and \$150 a month for the same insurance. A full-time employee enrolling an entire family in HealthSelect pays \$286 a month in premiums; a part-time employee seeking the same coverage will pay \$576 a month.

Remember: your TexFlex Reimbursement accounts must be renewed each year. For more information about benefits and the informative fairs, go to <http://www.ers.state.tx.us/Insurance/Default.htm>. ☆



Mail Drop

AMARILLO DISTRICT

From: P. Miller via e-mail

I stopped at the rest area about 60 miles from Amarillo. I was very impressed with the rest stop. It is the best place to stop — beautiful. A lady from Missouri and I stood and talked about how great it was. I live in Oklahoma and we have nothing like that. Thank you for a nice place to stop.



BEAUMONT DISTRICT

From: Richard W. Kelly
Kountze, Texas

A TxDOT maintenance crew under the supervision of **Todd E. Dinger** recently was on FM 1003, near where I live. I just wanted to tell you this crew really did a great job on cleaning the ditches here in front of our homes.

This job was done in a very short time and you could tell they took pride in doing their job. I can't say enough about the crew — they really did their job that day. Several of

the landowners are very pleased.

This is only one situation of many where state employees have taken pride in their work and have not been recognized. I wish to take this time to make you aware of this maintenance section, along with the supervisor and the crew.



CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

From: Joe Mendoza
Corpus Christi, Texas

While I was traveling north on Highway 358, a tire with its rim (somehow ejected from a pickup's open bed) lodged under an 18-wheel truck belonging to a moving company. The tire then was propelled toward my vehicle with considerable velocity.

My efforts to avoid being hit by the tire were futile. The impact caused considerable damage to my vehicle and rendered it inoperable. Luckily, I did not receive any injuries, but my vehicle had to be towed away to a local dealership.

One of your employees, Mr. Lupe

Lopez, witnessed the accident and quickly offered assistance. He ascertained if I or any other party had sustained any injuries. Furthermore, he quickly called the proper authorities.

Although I was startled by this incident, it was reassuring and comforting to have Mr. Lopez in the immediate area to assist with this unfortunate incident.

His unselfish actions and concern for the public warrant recognition and gratitude. Furthermore, he is truly an asset to your agency in general and the citizens of Corpus Christi in particular.

Lopez is a maintenance technician in Nueces maintenance office in the Corpus Christi district.



TYLER DISTRICT

From: Ruth Blanton
Longview, Texas

One of your employees, **Dennis Greeson**, came to my rescue in a crisis. I was driving east on Highway 322. My brakes failed and

■ See **LETTERS**, Page 13

A done deal



Amarillo district adds bike lanes, sidewalks and more in Dalhart project

TxDOT photo / Wil McCarley, Amarillo District

In a project that began in February 2002, TxDOT widened FM 281, added a center turn lane, sidewalks, bike lanes, illumination and improved drainage on the roadway in south Dalhart. The \$5.6 million project was completed in May 2003. The Dalhart City Council recently passed a resolution expressing appreciation to TxDOT for the improvements.

DIAMOND LANE by Kevin Eaker



DIAMOND LANE is a new cartoon feature of TNews centering on life at TxDOT. Created exclusively for the department by Houston District graphic artist and intranet webmaster Kevin Eaker, the strip brings the humor of everyday TxDOT life to the pages of TNews. Eaker, 36, is a five-year

TxDOT veteran who lived in California and New Mexico before his move to Houston in 1986. His first cartoon strip, drawn when he was in the fifth grade, launched his future in transportation comics by featuring Pepe the Pilot, a French aviator.

Mail Drop

Continued from Page 12

I lost control of the car. I was able to pull the emergency brake, turn off the ignition, and pull off the highway. There was a distinctive burning smell.

At this time, Mr. Greeson drove up. He and another worker were working on the highway a short distance ahead. He saw us having trouble and came to check on us. He stayed with us (a friend was with me) while we tried to get help. I had no one to call. Mr. Greeson drove us to a wrecker service on Estes Parkway.

He was very nice and I just want to take the opportunity to say how much I appreciate him.

Dennis Greeson is a transportation maintenance technician in the Tyler District.

TRAVEL DIVISION

**From: Lewis Stephens,
Maj. Gen. (ret.)
Dallas, Texas**

This letter is written to commend a state employee with the Texas

Department of Transportation.

On a recent trip en route to Texas, my wife and I left some valuables in an Arkansas motel. At the state of Texas information center in Texarkana, **Dawn Worthington** helped us retrieve our valuables.

We are proud of our Texas information centers.

This letter was sent to the governor's office, which forwarded it to the office of the TxDOT executive director. Dawn Worthington is a travel counselor at the Texarkana travel information center in the Atlanta District.)

PHARR DISTRICT

**From: Dr. Charlie H. Evans
Houston, Texas**

This letter is way overdue. On March 21, I lost my drive shaft in the middle of I-77 at the Primera overpass in Harlingen. Drivers of two trucks from the Texas Department of Transportation stopped to assist me. Both were very helpful, but one in particular stayed with me until the wrecker arrived, which turned out to be a

very long wait (over two hours). He was very helpful in not only letting me use his cell phone, but in calling the automobile dealership to try to hurry up the wrecker. I am extremely grateful for his concern and kindness. I was very impressed with his professional manner.

Although not named in the letter, Emilio Duenuez assisted Dr. Evans. Duenuez is a maintenance technician with the Pharr District's San Benito Maintenance Office.

WACO DISTRICT

**From: F.C. Joy,
Georgetown, Texas**

While driving south on I-35 from Belton to Georgetown, we had a flat tire. We had barely stopped when a TxDOT truck stopped and the driver asked if we needed help. We are two senior citizens in our seventies and, boy, did we need help. Your two men quickly took off the flat tire and put on the spare. We didn't get their names, but we offered to pay the men for their

■ See MAIL DROP, Page 15



Mile Markers

35 years

Harvey R. Ballard - Dallas
Javier Herrera - El Paso
Edward E. Hampson - San Antonio
Gilberto Sanchez - San Antonio
William R. Hibbs - Wichita Falls
Kenneth W. Ulbig - Wichita Falls

30 years

Rodney L. Cox - Abilene
Larry D. Morris - Abilene
David R. Petree - Abilene
Sheri S. Lang - Amarillo
Dennis F. Ogradny - Austin
Charles A. Rabik - Austin
Danny J. McKinnon - Dallas
Natividad F. Vargas - Dallas
Donald M. Cathey - Houston
Dennis E. Zimmerman - Houston
Erbin J. McDowell - Paris
John C. Benke - San Antonio
George B. De La Garza - San Antonio
Glen R. Hartman - San Antonio
Leslie H. Samsel - San Antonio
Edwin W. Kostka Jr. - Yoakum
Maynard J. Wagner - Yoakum
Mary M. Otahal - General Service
Larry W. Crooks - Information Systems
Charles M. Craig - Vehicle Titles & Registration

25 years

Jose L. Sustaita - Austin
Melvin D. Harris - Austin
Pablo V. Ramirez - El Paso
Buford H. Carr Jr. - Houston
Kathleen Z. Chavez - Houston
Jodie W. Kiesewetter - Houston
Nancy R. Robuck - Houston
Ricardo B. Alvarado - Laredo
Jane P. Schumann - Laredo
James M. Combes - Lubbock
Roberto D. Garza Jr. - Pharr
Victor C. Martinez - Pharr
Antonio S. Valdez - Pharr
Susan B. Matthews - San Antonio
Billy D. Sparks - San Angelo
Rickey G. Newman - Tyler
Rosalie V. Vrba - Waco
Michael W. Ward - Waco
Alice M. Cockrell - Yoakum
Jim W. Dillard - Information Systems
Michael C. Ellis - Motor Carrier
Gloria S. Cole - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Ada R. Elliott - Vehicle Titles & Registration

20 years

Margaret E. Brooks - Amarillo
Jimmy C. Gibson - Austin
James W. Parker - Austin
Cathy A. Griffin - Brownwood
Richard D. Hyndman - Bryan
Darlene K. Grooms - Dallas
Urban W. Lankford - Dallas
Judith J. Anderson - Fort Worth
Frances S. Willison - Houston
Alvin L. Cartwright - Lubbock
Patricia D. Whitaker - Lubbock
Eddie B. Munoz - Odessa
Karl A. Puckett - Paris
David L. Garcia - Pharr
Vidal Quintanilla - Pharr
Glenn R. Talley - San Antonio
Rickey G. Bailey - Tyler
William L. Thompson - Tyler
Nathan S. Whitley - Waco
Francisco Guevara Jr. - Construction
James L. Barton - Information Systems
Vanessa D. Miles - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Nancy D. Perry - Vehicle Titles & Registration

15 years

Nick N. Martinez - Amarillo
Ralph E. Robinson - Amarillo
Doyle D. Moellering - Austin
Kenneth N. Shaffer - Austin
Dianna L. Foreman - Beaumont
John E. Sudela - Beaumont
Matthew G. Stevens - Brownwood
Tony L. Seals - Dallas
Lazaro T. Tarango - El Paso
Loyl C. Bussell - Fort Worth
Leon A. Davis - Houston
Darrell R. Elliott - Houston
Robinson C. James - Houston
Clyde R. Jatzlau - Houston
Lovey M. Reynolds - Houston
Steven B. Troy - Houston
Stanley L. Evans - Paris
Kenneth D. Thomason - Paris
Joe T. Cantu - San Antonio
Arlen G. Graff - San Antonio
George R. Herrmann - San Angelo
Jerry W. Linn - Tyler
Robert Lopez - Yoakum
Peter B. Krause - Design
Elizabeth A. Keller - Finance
Dennis K. Markwardt - Maintenance
Mallie M. Evans - Motor Carrier
Guy W. Godfrey - Traffic
Robert B. Doetsch - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Robert J. Haapanen Jr. - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Terri L. Housworth - Vehicle Titles & Registration

10 years

Barbara J. Franks - Amarillo
Harrel E. Hardy - Amarillo
Brenda G. Knoll - Amarillo
Randy Calkins - Austin
Dixie L. Duncan - Austin
Adam Ceasar - Beaumont
Cynthia L. Halligan - Beaumont
Garry R. Leblanc - Beaumont
Mereyn A. Downs - Brownwood
Shelley L. Schuman - Brownwood
Chad M. Clossin - Bryan
Travis H. Bateman - Childress
Larry E. Gambol - Childress
Debra D. Key - Childress
Alberto Perez - Corpus Christi
Sandra A. Miller - Dallas
Hassan Moghadassi - Dallas
David L. Widmer - Dallas
Barbara L. Brown - El Paso
Martina J. Curtis - El Paso
Donna M. Cooper - Fort Worth
Steward Van Haasen - Fort Worth
Henry E. Kellumen - Houston
Barry D. Teafatiller - Lubbock
Emilio Delva Jr. - Lufkin
Joy M. Daniel - Paris
Nancy L. Russell - Paris
Dennis M. Heap II - San Angelo
Bentley D. Mittel - San Angelo
James W. Whitlock Jr. - San Angelo
Keys S. Bordwine - Tyler
Karen S. Gardner - Tyler
Shawn M. Uschan - Waco
Ted E. Gregg - Wichita Falls
Joseph M. Roche - Construction
Leon W. Elkins - General Services
Patricia J. Murphy - Human Resources
Eloisa Torres - Maintenance
Raul Vela - Motor Carrier

Christine M. Willrich - Traffic
Patricia C. Valdez - Vehicle Titles & Registration

5 years

Stuart H. Jeffrey - Abilene
Harold B. Cave - Amarillo
James D. Gresham - Amarillo
James R. Johnston - Amarillo
William C. McCarley - Amarillo
Kevin P. Camp - Atlanta
Ricardo Calzoncit - Austin
Jerry D. Copeland Jr. - Austin
Roberto Elizondo - Austin
Eric G. Tallas - Austin
Kevin W. Jones - Beaumont
Elton W. Marshall - Beaumont
James D. Wilson - Beaumont
Randall R. Winger - Beaumont
Bill T. Warren - Childress
Pablo Anguiano - Corpus Christi
Richard A. Chauvette - Corpus Christi
Jeremy M. Hinojosa - Corpus Christi
Scott B. Sanders - Corpus Christi
Jennifer J. Davis - Dallas
Jackie L. Haley - Dallas
Dawn D. Anderson - El Paso
Victor J. De La Garza - El Paso
Abel F. Galindo - El Paso
David J. Moore - Fort Worth
Michael A. Chadick - Houston
Kenneth Edwards - Houston
Younathan Y. Youash - Houston
John R. Aguilar - Laredo
John C. Sell - Laredo
Rance J. Golightly - Lubbock
Timothy B. Montgomery - Lubbock
Charles L. Currie - Lufkin
Leonard Y. Holguin - Odessa
Roland Robles - Odessa
Brian S. Dornier - Paris
Tad E. Eudy - Paris
Charles D. Evans - Paris
Micheal A. Faulks - Paris
Carl E. Lawson - Paris
Dagoberto Salinas - Pharr
Mario C. Juarez - San Antonio
Mark M. Sanford - San Antonio
John C. Wyatt - San Antonio
Thomas R. Johnston - San Angelo
Thomas W. Van Pelt - San Angelo
Ernest J. Atkinson - Tyler
Wendy L. Bellar - Tyler
Daryl J. Daigle - Tyler
Thomas A. Reid - Tyler
Mouness H. Yacoub - Tyler
James E. Bailey - Waco
Eddy L. Pruett - Waco
Donald W. Pickel - Wichita Falls
Jennifer L. Bishop - Yoakum
Steven C. Gartman Sr. - Yoakum
David C. Stolpa - Bridge
Mary L. Amaya - Finance
Robert R. Snipes - Finance
Beatriz Alvarado - Human Resources
Monica Y. Scott - Human Resources
Gary D. Murrell - Maintenance
Stacy A. West - Motor Carrier
Kathy K. Walton - Right of Way
Jerry D. Wanslow - Traffic
Bertha Deweese - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Helen C. Leonard - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Joann C. Reynolds - Vehicle Titles & Registration
Arnold C. Truax - Vehicle Titles & Registration

Editor's Note: You may have noticed that this page looks a little different this month. What we've done is sort the Mile Markers by years of service and not by district, division or office. Also, we are still working to develop a system to get information on retiree deaths. We appreciate your patience.



Continued from Page 13

assistance. But they absolutely refused to accept payment. Hat's off to TxDOT. We really appreciate the help.



SAN ANGELO DISTRICT

From: Johnny Moore
Big Spring, Texas

I am the maintenance-section supervisor in the Big Spring area office. My son recently was a passenger in one of our church vans that was involved in an accident near Junction. Although the van was totaled, thankfully no one riding in it was seriously injured.

The people of Junction and the First Baptist Church of Junction were great. They turned a bad situation into a much better one. They brought food and drinks to the emergency room, talked with the kids, offered transportation to get them home, and much more.

Our sponsors that were there told me about one person who really helped them out. His name is **Elzy Beam** and he is an employee with the TxDOT office in Junction.

Apparently he was called out

because of the accident and the damaged guardrail. They told me that he helped them upright the trailer the van was towing and get it repaired so that they could get it home. He was generally a big help and comfort to them.

I know he will probably tell you he was "just doing his job" but I appreciate what he did. It's good to know that there are fellow TxDOT people there to help when you need them.

Elzy Beam is a crew chief in the San Angelo District's Junction office.



YOAKUM DISTRICT

From: Elizabeth Ellis
Austin, Texas

Please allow me to compliment and thank your wonderful **James Untermeyer** of the Yoakum District.

We were stranded on Highway 10 in 103-degree heat without help and he saved our lives by changing our tire.

What's more, he refused to take anything for his trouble.

Having people like James around is what makes Texas and America great. ★



Lighthouse to re-open this summer

Continued from Page 7

ect, launched in February, includes stabilizing the lighthouse foundation, scraping, cleaning and painting the interior of the lighthouse and repairing or replacing windows and doors. A replica of the original handrail on the lantern deck will be installed and the existing beacon will be operated with solar panels and batteries.

The keepers cemetery will be defined with a new vinyl fence around it. Concrete walkways will

be built to connect the lighthouse to the wood marsh walkway and the restrooms.

Currently, the only transportation to the island is by personal boats. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's ferryboat, which provided access, burned and may not be replaced due to budget constraints. A private ferry to transport visitors to the island is under consideration. ★

More information:
www.matagordalighthouse.com

Calendar

2003

AUGUST

- 5** Process & Evaluate Bids, Austin, GSD
- 5-6** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 5-7** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Austin, CST
- 6** PMIS NW Region Pre-work Meeting, Austin, CST
- 12-14** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Beaumont, CST
- 11-14** 2003 Design Conference, Corpus Christi, DES
- 19-21** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Austin, CST
- 20** PMIS East Region Pre-work Meeting, Austin, CST
- 20-21** Alternate Dispute Resolution, Austin, GSD
- 26-28** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Dallas, CST
- 27** LBJ's Birthday (holiday, skeleton crew)
- 28** Commission Meeting, Austin

SEPTEMBER

- 1** Labor Day (holiday)
- 5** Public Procurement, Austin, GSD
- 9-10** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 10-12** Advanced Public Procurement, San Antonio, GSD
- 18** Government Supply Chain, Austin, GSD
- 25** Commission Meeting, Austin

OCTOBER

- 6** Yom Kippur (holiday, optional)
- 7-8** Equipment Admin/Purchasing Meeting, Austin, GSD
- 8-9** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 8-10** General Public Procurement, Plano, GSD
- 13** DE/DD/OD meeting, College Station
- 14-15** 2003 Transportation Short Course
- 16-17** Contract Management, San Antonio, GSD
- 23-24** Effective Contract Writing, Houston, GSD
- 26-29** Road Profilers User's Group Meeting, Austin, CST
- 30** Commission Meeting, Austin

NOVEMBER

- 3-6** Research Management Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 4-5** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 5-6** Negotiated Contract Super Conference, Austin, CSO
- 6** Productivity-based Contracts, San Antonio, GSD
- 6-7** Competitive Sealed Proposals, Plano, GSD

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

backtracks



The palm trees in the background make us think this old photo complements our coastal theme. But where is it? If you know anything about this photo, please let TNews know by calling Quevarra Moten at (512) 463-6397 or e-mailing her at qmoten@dot.state.tx.us.



TxDOT employee **Weldon Gaston** was the first to identify last month's Backtracks as Spur 495/Business 59 in Nacogdoches. According to Gaston, the Sacred Heart Catholic Church is on the left side of the photo and the First Baptist Church is on the right.

Gaston has worked with the Lufkin District Right of Way Section since 1986. He now serves as the district's Assistant Right of Way Administrator. ⬠



T RANSPORTATION NEWS ⬠

125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

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