



A LEGACY EVOLVES

Embracing Tradition and Versatility, the 2024 Brand Refresh Marks a Milestone in Visual Identity



1924



1952



1978



1991



2012

Let's make safety a habit every day

MARC WILLIAMS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Safety never goes on vacation. As classrooms start to empty out and summer travelers take to the road, we at TxDOT graduate to peak roadwork season. We ask every employee and every motorist to elevate vigilance in the summer months to avoid incidents and injury in our work zones.

During National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 15 – 19, our districts took action to raise awareness of work zone safety, including TxDOT's "Be Safe. Drive Smart." campaign offering safe driving tips for navigating those areas. Many of you wore orange on April 17 for #GoOrangeDay to support work zone safety and to honor the families of victims who have lost their lives in work zones. You can find pictures of the TxDOT Family participating in #GoOrangeDay on Crossroads.

With up to 1,900 active work zones statewide, the importance of TxDOT's work zone safety awareness campaign increases with each passing year as the state's population and number of crashes continue to grow. Last year, there were 26,305 traffic crashes in these work zones, a 3.3% increase from the previous year.

This month we're kicking off our "Safe Days of Summer" campaign. This year's theme is "Safety is a Habit," and the Occupational Safety Division is encouraging you to be intentional about building good habits whether on or off the road. Each year between May and August, our Occupational Safety and Traffic Safety divisions renew the challenge to each TxDOT district and division to have a summer free of incident and injury.

Additionally, our unwavering focus on safety, which includes public service announcements, education outreach and collaboration with our partners at Associated General Contractors, is yielding results. We saw a 4% drop in work zone fatalities in 2023, but even one death is too many. Our work is far from done.



We need everyone's intentional safety efforts – and habits – to make this summer the safest in TxDOT's history.

While we train our focus on the safety of our road workers, we also must stay vigilant in the effort to end the streak of daily deaths on our roadways. Last year, more than 4,200 people died on Texas roads – making 2023 among the top five deadliest years in our state since we started tracking in 1940.

You can learn more about the ways TxDOT continues to promote safety across the agency in the feature story on page 17.

Getting to our goal of zero injuries, zero incidents and zero fatalities will take our unwavering focus and the strength of making safety a habit. I know we are ready to meet the challenge. ■



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Blowout means chance for employee to help out

CHILDRESS DISTRICT

During a hot day in August, an elderly man and his wife experienced a blowout on one of the Childress District’s roadways. Anyone who has experienced something similar knows how frustrating it is to lose a tire, especially when the summer sun is beating down. At the time, the temperature was more than 100 degrees and climbing.

As the man got out to inspect the damage to the tires on the trailer he was towing, he caught the attention of Jordan Baker, engineering assistant for the Childress District, who was traveling along the same roadway.

Without hesitation, Baker got out of his vehicle and offered to help. When all was said and done, Baker replaced both tires on the trailer and was able to quickly get the couple back on the roadway.

Later, the man reached out to the district, praising Baker and thanking him for his selfless act.

“I offered to pay him, but he wouldn’t accept,” the man said.

On that day, Baker helped two complete strangers who will always remember him.

“Since Jordan came to the district, he’s done nothing but overachieve in every aspect of his job,” said Chuck Steed, director of transportation programming and development in the district. “Jordan could have just driven by and not helped with the flat, but that’s not the kind of young man he is. He saw someone in need and did all he could to help. We are fortunate to have Jordan as a member of the Childress team. I look forward to watching him grow into a future leader.” ■

Story and photo by Ginger Wilson



Jordan Baker helped an elderly couple with a blowout on the road.

Send information or any thank-you emails, letters or calls you or your colleagues receive to TxDOT@txdot.gov so we can recognize TxDOT employee achievements.

NEW VESSEL ADDED to Galveston ferry fleet

HOUSTON DISTRICT



In March, TxDOT proudly unveiled a state-of-the-art ferry vessel, Esperanza “Hope” Andrade, the first Galveston ferry to be named after a woman and the first to be named after a Latina. The celebration took place on International Women’s Day, adding an extra layer of significance to the occasion. This is the latest vessel added to the fleet of ferries running from Galveston Island to the Bolivar Peninsula.



The new Galveston ferry can transport up to 70 passenger vehicles.



A new Galveston ferry was christened in March named after Esperanza “Hope” Andrade (center). Joining Andrade were (l to r) Eliza Paul, Marc Williams, Rick Perry, her grandsons Ramiro and Diego Andrade, and Raquelle Lewis. Photo by Jen Reel

Andrade made an indelible mark on Texas transportation serving as the first female chair of the Texas Transportation Commission and the first Latina Texas secretary of state. Galveston’s ferries are named after former chairs of the Texas Transportation Commission.

The debut of the Esperanza “Hope” Andrade ferry heralds a new era characterized by efficiency, sustainability and safety. Stretching an impressive 293 feet, the new craft showcases cutting-edge propulsion technology and pioneering battery energy storage systems. Boasting improved fuel economy and reduced operational costs, it can transport up to 70 passenger vehicles with each voyage averaging about 18 minutes.

The new ferry went into service just in time for the peak demand that begins with spring break season.

Operating around the clock, seven days a week, weather permitting, the Galveston ferry system is an indispensable link for Texas’s transportation network, ensuring seamless flow of goods, services and people along coastal highways. ■

Story contributed by Leo Flores and Danny Perez

I AM A... BRIDGE INSPECTION COORDINATOR

ATLANTA DISTRICT

James Moore, a bridge inspection coordinator with the Atlanta District, grew up near Texarkana and began his career at TxDOT in 2005. He worked as a design technician for 13 years performing signal and illumination design. While in that role, he learned about troubleshooting and equipment repair from TxDOT's signal technicians. Moore also played an instrumental part in developing the district's intelligent transportation system program. After accumulating that wealth of experience, Moore became the district's bridge inspection coordinator in 2018.

Moore graduated from Texas A&M University and was a project manager for local municipalities and businesses before joining TxDOT. He is married to his high school sweetheart, Dana, and they are the proud parents of two talented boys.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS AS A BRIDGE INSPECTION COORDINATOR.

I maintain the Atlanta District's bridge files. That includes reviewing the inspections that consultant inspectors perform. I evaluate the inspectors to ensure they work safely with the correct tools. After the inspections, I review the files for the proper documents and photos. I also perform reinspections at select bridges to check that the consultant inspector's work is correct and complete. As a team leader, I inspect new bridges.

My job doesn't end there, though. All the data that the inspectors generate is used to track the maintenance needs of our bridges. I work with our maintenance office on maintenance contracts for the bridge preventive maintenance program.

Another part of my job is supporting the maintenance office with off-year inspections. When needed, I provide training on new processes and procedures with our various bridge applications.

WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART ABOUT BEING A BRIDGE INSPECTION COORDINATOR?

Service to others is the most rewarding part of my job. My job contributes to a safer, more reliable, long-lasting bridge system for Texas and the traveling public. I don't get to be as directly involved in the repair and maintenance of our transportation system anymore, but I see that my contributions put the right information in the right hands to do the right work.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR JOB?

One challenge facing the entire state is updating scour documentation. A primary reason for bridge failures is the removal of the materials from around the foundation by the movement of the water, which is called "scour." So, documentation is an important part of the job. It may be the biggest stressor for any bridge inspection coordinator that deals with the scour evaluations in their district.

WHAT SKILLS AND ABILITIES ARE THE MOST HELPFUL IN THIS ROLE?

Communication and being a cheerleader for others are the important skills and abilities in this position. Having a good attitude goes a long way when dealing with tough situations. Problem solving also plays a big role in this job.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE ATLANTA DISTRICT?

The supervisors and administration have always given me the means to expand and be better in all my endeavors. In the Atlanta District, we all want to see each other achieve greatness. ■

“

Having a good attitude goes a long way when dealing with tough situations.

”

JAMES MOORE



NEW LOGO AND BRAND GUIDELINES GIVE TxDOT A *FRESH* LOOK

The Communications Division is updating the TxDOT brand guidelines, brand templates and logo. Employees or anyone using TxDOT's branding for new content should look for the updated, easier-to-use templates and the updated logo on the TxDOT Brand Templates page on Crossroads. They will be available starting May 1.

"We update the brand templates in minor ways from time to time and downloading new copies ensures you're using the 'latest and greatest' version," said Hoyt Haffelder, brand and design branch manager in the Creative Services Section of the Communications Division.

The update improves visual consistency, usability and accessibility.

"The previous visual brand elements – logo, fonts, colors, graphics – were hard to work with for designers in Creative Services, employees and contractors," Haffelder said.

The Creative Services and Internal Communications sections of the Communications Division collaborated to update the brand color palettes, font and logo. They also updated the brand templates for presentations, email signatures, letterhead, reports and more. These new templates are easier to use. For example, the new presentation template cover-slide image can now be updated by users instead of requiring a designer to adjust it.

The new brand guidelines and templates are also more accessible, adhering to accessibility standards outlined in the updated TxDOT Accessibility Policy signed by Executive Director Marc Williams in January.



The brand refresh includes an updated logo that keeps the "Flying T" design but has solid red bars instead of 12 separate lines.

"These new guidelines include having just one logo, as multiple logo options can be confusing to those with cognitive disabilities," said Don Barrett, digital accessibility specialist for the Communications Division. "Other updates include a contrasting color palette to help users with visual impairments distinguish between content, and a simplified font that is more legible to individuals with learning or reading disabilities."

The Creative Services Section paid special attention to color, such as how we perceive amounts of bold red at a subconscious level.

"Hoyt and David [Munns, Creative Services Section director] focused on every single detail," said Alejandro Garcia, director of Communications and Public Affairs. "It's a subtle difference some won't notice, but that's the point. It's supposed to be simple, clean, bold, yet discrete, and streamlined into only one design moving



TxDOT's logo and brand continues to evolve.

forward. This is part of a larger vision to strengthen TxDOT's brand and feel on everything we publish – internally and externally. Kudos to Creative Services for their meticulousness.”

One of the most significant, yet subtle, changes in the brand refresh is to the long-time TxDOT logo. The “Flying T” introduced in 1991 was the result of a statewide contest. The winning design came from Derrick Caballero, a graphic designer with the Center for Transportation Research at the University of Texas. The updated logo keeps the same design except the 12 thin lines extending off the star are now four solid bars.

“The ‘new’ logo has been in use for video and apparel for some time,” Haffelder said. “It was created because the existing logo didn’t work well in those media. We’re just designating that version as the primary logo to simplify things.”

If you have any physical items with the 12-line version of the logo on it, don’t throw them out. Just use the updated logo for anything new.

“Any new orders for physical items displaying the brand should use the new standards,” Haffelder said. “Existing items are all fine to use until they need to be replaced.” ■

Story contributed by Kelly E. Lindner

EMPLOYEES HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF *seeking help* AFTER TRAUMA

In November 2022, General Transportation Technician Jordan Larson was conducting a train that struck and killed an 18-year-old attempting suicide. Afterward, he took a week off work and contacted his company’s Employee Assistance Program.

Like many others, he underestimated the ongoing impact of the trauma of the event he witnessed and experienced symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. In hindsight, he acknowledges not allocating sufficient time to process the incident. Advocating against stereotypes to “man up,” Larson emphasizes the need to break down barriers associated with seeking help.

“If you feel like you need to talk to someone, talk to someone,” Larson said. “It gives you an opportunity to get out your emotions instead of bottling them up.”

In the hustle of our everyday lives, it’s easy to overlook the significance of our mental and emotional welfare. For some, wellness is focused solely on physical health, sometimes neglecting the role that mental health plays in our overall well-being.

Witnessing and responding to traumatic events inside or outside of the workplace can greatly affect an individual’s mental health as they come to terms with the event.

Two other Corpus Christi District employees share their experiences navigating challenging times as reminders of how important it is to seek support.

“If you’re telling yourself that you can do it alone, you probably need help and can’t do it yourself.”

CATHY PRUITT
Maintenance Office Manager

In January, General Transportation Technician Jason Koliba was present when a colleague suffered a cardiac arrest at work. Koliba swiftly intervened, administering CPR until emergency services arrived. Despite his efforts, the colleague did not survive. The tragic event left Koliba grappling with feelings of guilt and personal responsibility.

Despite his experience as a volunteer firefighter and familiarity with trauma coping mechanisms, Koliba was deeply affected by the loss. Although uncertain and worried about judgement from his peers, Koliba

participated in counseling and found comfort in the process. He describes his experience as “judgement free” – a place where he was able to express and process his emotions.

“Just do it,” Koliba said. “It doesn’t matter how strong you think you are. We all have our weaknesses and it’s okay. It’s human nature.”

Maintenance Office Manager Cathy Pruitt first sought counseling in 2015 after a boating accident that left her adult daughter blind. In the aftermath, Pruitt’s daughter and son-in-law separated. Pruitt and her husband supported her daughter and grandchildren, which meant Pruitt’s life went from an empty nest to a bustling full house.

Balancing new family dynamics, a daughter in rehab, a now-strained marriage and the impact of Hurricane Harvey, Pruitt reached a breaking point in 2017 and sought counseling. While she was initially hesitant, counseling proved to be a lifeline for her and her family. Asking for help marked a first step toward gaining the tools to navigate their shared challenges and strengthen their bonds. Pruitt was relieved when she learned

that the entire family was eligible for free counseling sessions since they all lived in the same household.

“Please put yourself first,” Pruitt said. “Seek the help you need. Just do it! If you’re telling yourself that you can do it alone, you probably need help and can’t do it yourself. If you start seeing someone and you don’t click with them, ask for someone else.”

These stories are powerful reminders of the importance of seeking support and that you don’t have to shoulder these experiences alone.

Whether facing trauma, grief or everyday stress, getting professional help offers invaluable guidance and positive coping mechanisms. Seeking assistance is a courageous step toward healing and growth. It’s time to break the silence surrounding challenges and overcome the stigma associated with reaching out for help.

If you or someone you know is struggling, please connect with professional mental health resources. Comprehensive information about resources offered to employees through TxDOT’s benefits can be found in the Journey to Wellness article on page 20. ■

Story contributed by Arlin Alvarez



From left to right: Jordan Larson, Cathy Pruitt and Jason Koliba with the Corpus Christi District share their experiences with counseling services after facing traumatic situations. Photo provided by Cathy Pruitt

ENTERPRISE POLICY LIBRARY

brings clarity

Finding the most updated agencywide policies is now just a click away. The Strategic Initiatives and Innovation Division continually updates the Enterprise Policy Library repository for all TxDOT employees and stakeholders.

An enterprise policy is any TxDOT management decision approved by executive leadership that applies to more than one division or district. It is usually related to activity within the department, such as employee behaviors and responsibilities. In other words, enterprise policies are directives written by a division or district — and approved by executive leadership — that must be followed by the entire department. Employees can access the accessible and searchable library on the Enterprise Policy Governance SharePoint.

Building and maintaining the Enterprise Policy Library has truly been an agencywide effort.

“We’ve met with all 34 TxDOT divisions to help them distinguish and identify enterprise policies they may have residing in a memo or email that provide guidance or direction to other divisions or districts, which made it possible for us to formalize and officially publish these policies for all to see,” said Enterprise Program Section Director Liz Osgood. “We’re pleased to have such a diverse representation of enterprise policies in one spot and readily available to all TxDOT employees.”

Before this initiative, enterprise policies could be difficult for employees to find. They were often embedded in manuals, standing alone as memos, or otherwise intertwined with processes and procedures. Working with each TxDOT division over the past five years, the Strategic Initiatives and Innovation Division’s Enterprise Policy team extracted language intended to serve as agencywide policy. The policies were vetted by the General Counsel and Compliance divisions, the Tactical and Executive Steering committees, and administration before being signed by the executive director and published into the Enterprise Policy Library.



The Enterprise Policy Library doesn't just offer a static collection of rules. It's a dynamic resource, providing invaluable insights into day-to-day operations and TxDOT's broader mission. With searchability powered by keywords and metadata, employees can now swiftly find the guidance they need, transforming what was once a daunting task into a breeze. This workflow solution adds a new level of automation and a more intuitive approach to policy creation and oversight.

Anyone wanting to learn more about the Enterprise Policy process, including policy development tutorials and templates, can visit the Enterprise Policy Governance SharePoint site. Interested parties can also contact the Enterprise Policy team at STR_PolicyTeam@txdot.gov with any questions. ■

CONCRETE PLANS

TxDOT offers new training program for concrete testing

MATERIALS AND TESTS DIVISION

Concrete is everywhere in our daily lives. It's the most versatile material we use at TxDOT. From pavements to structures like bridges and flyovers, the many and varied uses of concrete hold the weight of our world.

Although it's a surprisingly simple mix for such a strong material – just add cement, rock, sand and water – that basic recipe isn't quite enough to produce lasting results. Romans discovered thousands of years ago that the right materials make a difference. They used lime and volcanic ash mixed with aggregates and water to create what we consider the first hydraulic concrete that formed structures still seen today.

Just like the Romans, TxDOT looks to different types of cements, additives and admixtures to get the applications we need for durability and versatility.

"If you do it right, concrete can withstand the test of time," said Rachel Cano, transportation engineer with the Materials and Tests Division.

But if done wrong, strength and durability are compromised. Testing the hardened properties of concrete is necessary to ensure that quality concrete is supporting TxDOT projects.

That's why TxDOT has created a new concrete testing training program that's changing the way districts prepare for these essential duties.

Although quality control for mixing and testing concrete typically falls to contractors, TxDOT inspectors must periodically test samples for acceptance. Last year, district engineers requested a program to prepare technicians for certification, especially for new and less-experienced employees.

Since 2017, the Materials and Tests Division has offered American Concrete Institute certification programs and has certified more than 600 employees. However, entry into these classes requires extensive experience. Employees not ready for certification can take this new training program to reinforce the importance of properly conducting concrete testing.



Roy Estrada Jr. and Rachel Cano get hands on in the Materials and Tests Divisions' new concrete testing training course.

"Two people can interpret the same procedure in two different ways," Cano said. "To address these issues, we focus on details, perspective and performance with uniformity as a goal. We know bringing people into our lab for hands-on instruction is a must."

The Materials and Tests Division team developed a 2.5-day course to cover the kinds of field and strength testing that TxDOT employees would see daily when dealing with concrete. And while the class doesn't offer certification, it does give in-depth information on how and why these tests are run. It also offers job simulations where participants perform testing as if they were in the field.

Dorothy Murphy, transportation maintenance crew chief with the Houston District, took the course last fall and has encouraged her three inspectors to do the same.

"I'm so thankful to have this hands-on course so my team can gain more confidence as inspectors and understand what the contractors are doing," Murphy said.

Those who've taken the course agree. In a recent survey, 80% said they felt very likely to be successful in becoming certified.

To register for Concrete Testing Technician Training, search MTD300 in PeopleSoft. For certification courses, search MTD200 and MTD201. Classes are held at the Stassney Headquarters in Austin. ■

Story and photo by Jen Reel

TxDOT ACQUIRES LAND TO DOUBLE capacity for emergency shelter

AUSTIN DISTRICT

As part of the Austin District's ongoing effort to help community members transition out of homelessness, TxDOT recently acquired an additional seven acres adjacent to the existing Esperanza Community emergency shelter in Austin. The action could potentially double the capacity of the facility, which serves as a non-congregate complex in East Austin.

The additional land will provide more temporary housing for individuals at risk of homelessness, particularly during the upcoming construction of the I-35 Capital Express Central project. During construction, TxDOT will remove elevated structures and reconstruct bridges throughout the project corridor, where some homeless individuals currently seek shelter.

"Through the guidance and direction of Gov. Abbott, TxDOT continues to provide solutions for Austin's homeless population," said TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams. "While we will continue to work with law enforcement to help reduce unlawful camping in the state right of way, this collaborative effort will ease the transition for the Esperanza Community, as improvement to I-35 through downtown begins."

The shelter got its start in 2019 when Gov. Greg Abbott tasked TxDOT, along with the Department of Public Safety and Texas Department of Emergency Management, to establish a state-sanctioned camp for those sheltering along I-35 and other adjacent corridors.

The following year, TxDOT provided the first seven acres and partnered with The Other Ones Foundation to establish and manage the Esperanza Community. The facility quickly grew, providing shelter and associated services for up to 200 people experiencing chronic homelessness.

The foundation's mission is to transition Austin's homeless population into a productive community through shelter, opportunity and support. Programs



TxDOT recently acquired an additional seven acres adjacent to Esperanza Community, a non-congregate emergency shelter complex in the Austin District. Photo by Brad Wheelis

include highly personalized case management, housing navigation, 24-hour crisis management, substance use support and work opportunities.

"In the last four years, TxDOT's Austin District created the blueprint for how cities across Texas, and the country, can help address homelessness," said Gov. Abbott. "This additional capacity for temporary housing for those at risk of experiencing homelessness will allow more Texans to get the services they need at the Esperanza Community. This will help ensure TxDOT can continue the planned reconstruction of I-35 to further boost the Texas economy."

The Esperanza Community sets the stage for people to learn the skills needed to build and engage in community wherever they are in life.

"When we initially established our community, we couldn't have anticipated the significant support we would receive from TxDOT, the city and the state to enrich our offerings for those affected by homelessness," said The Other Ones Foundation Executive Director Chris Baker. "We are deeply grateful for their assistance." ■

Story contributed by Glynda Chu

TxDOT TEAMING UP TO PROTECT THE monarch butterfly on its migration

SAN ANGELO DISTRICT



Monarch flight diverters are being tested in hopes the netting will force the butterflies to fly above the road and avoid traffic. Photo provided by Texas A&M

Researchers in the San Angelo District are testing a new device to help more monarch butterflies survive their annual trek through Texas.

The monarch, the official insect of Texas, is the only known butterfly to make a two-way migration like birds do. These little insects weigh no more than a paper clip and travel thousands of miles between Canada and Mexico in an amazing feat. The monarchs' journey takes them right across Texas and major roadways like I-10.

Unfortunately, the eastern monarch butterfly population, previously in the hundreds of millions, has declined 80% in the last 20 years. Collisions with vehicles while flying low across the roads are contributing to the decline in population, according to researchers.

Hoping to reverse that trend, TxDOT and the Texas Transportation Institute partnered last year on a study to construct and evaluate a new device, the Monarch Flight Diverter, to determine if it would reduce the number of butterflies killed during the migration period. The diverters are netting that will force the monarch to fly higher above the road and avoid traffic.

The combined effort has included testing a prototype in 2023 to determine the best materials

for the netting and to ensure its structural suitability for field use. The team evaluated the nets against the elements to determine durability in wind, rain and sun. Researchers also tested its effectiveness in altering the flight path of the butterflies. Based on these prototypes, one type was chosen with the most suitable netting and stability.

In three trials with live monarch butterfly releases, the diverter is showing promise in its capacity to alter the monarchs' flight patterns.

To test its practical effectiveness, researchers installed one diverter last October at Howard Draw on I-10 in Crockett County. Studies show this location is a hotspot for butterfly deaths. With the netting spanning 225 feet long and 16 feet high, they are hopeful it will drive the monarchs up and over the interstate highway, allowing them to continue freely on their journey south.

Another test installation is a 300-foot diverter at the Lavaca Bay Causeway on SH 35.

The diverters will remain in place through 2024 while researchers monitor the results. Fingers crossed that more monarchs will make it through Texas safely this year! ■

Story contributed by Karen Threlkeld

FRESH APPROACH

results in new equipment for surveyors

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

TxDOT's survey coordinators are getting the benefit of the Information Technology Division's innovative new approach to developing contracts for hardware, which paved the way for surveyors and mappers to receive equipment upgrades for the first time in nearly a decade.

"In the past, TxDOT has simply purchased the technology and instruments that district survey coordinators use to provide measurements to engineers for their designs," said Matthew Bryant, manager of the Engineering Services Delivery Branch of the Customer Relationship Section of the Information Technology Division. "The last major upgrade of this technology was in 2015."

Division staff wanted to establish an effective way to keep the survey and mapping equipment current so surveyors did not have to wait 10 years to get new equipment.

"We wanted to stay current and support their needs," Bryant said. "We wanted to develop a contract for the hardware that was similar to a service contract, so we didn't have to have a new contract for every piece of equipment. But that was a radical idea for our industry."

This approach includes not just providing districts with a new set of equipment onsite but also a way to increase capacity as needed. The agreement with the vendor allows districts to "check out" additional pieces of equipment as needed for a short period of time and then return them.

"We can use these pieces of equipment without an additional purchase order because it's included in the hardware service contract," Bryant said. "The equipment is housed with the vendor. They even provide training on using it."

The hardware service contract also includes the option to test new and specialized tools as needed.

"This agreement gives us a lot of flexibility to meet production needs," Bryant said. "But we really had to change the industry to get the equipment manufacturer



Employees test out their new surveying equipment at a training session in Austin. Photo provided by the Engineering Services Delivery team

to embrace it. We talked to manufacturers, dealers and other state DOTs in the process. We are the first DOT to implement hardware as a service in this fashion."

About 150 surveyors and 100 mappers will benefit from the equipment refresh but the consumers of the information they collect will benefit as well. The refresh project went into place last fall. Thanks to this new approach, equipment needs will be evaluated annually now.

"The staff in my branch has managed this type of equipment for more than 40 years, so we had a good idea of the challenges employees are experiencing," Bryant said. "We knew what we wanted to do but we couldn't have done it without support from the districts and TxDOT's leadership. Anh Selissen, chief information officer, has really promoted this concept. It's a game changer." ■

Story contributed by Shannon McIntire

SAFE DAYS OF SUMMER 2024

SAFETY IS A HABIT

The Occupational Safety Division is excited to announce the launch of the 2024 Safe Days of Summer campaign, running from May 1 to Aug. 29. This year's theme, "Safety is a Habit," emphasizes the importance of incorporating safety practices into our daily routines at TxDOT.

Over the next 18 weeks, the division will provide information and resources to support Safety Mission Zero and prevent injuries, vehicle incidents and fatalities. Each week will focus on a different safety habit, with daily actions and tips to help you make safety a natural part of your workday.

The campaign covers a range of topics, including:

- Intentional habits.
- Summer safety.
- Injury prevention.
- Safe driving.
- Zero backing incidents.
- Zero striking fixed objects.

Safety tips will be distributed throughout the summer. While the summer months can be challenging for TxDOT employees, with excessive heat and increased road construction and maintenance operations, the Safe Days of Summer campaign reminds everyone to prioritize safety and look out for our co-workers.



The 2024 Safe Days of Summer campaign runs May 1 to Aug. 29. Photo provided by the Occupational Safety Division

"Building safety habits means putting safety first without a second thought," said Sam Salazar, Occupational Safety Division director. "The more we practice these habits, the more natural they become, until safety is just a part of who we are and how we work. This is another way of committing to the safety mindset. That's how we'll achieve Safety Mission Zero."

By focusing on these and other safety habits, we can continue the downward trend in injuries, vehicle incidents and fatalities at TxDOT. ■

Story contributed by Tracey Lamphere

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

multimodal plan outlines transit needs

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DIVISION



TxDOT is developing a Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan to identify the needs for transit options like this commuter rail in Denton. Photo by Michael Amador

TxDOT is currently developing a Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan to identify strategies for improved mobility and connectivity across Texas.

“Connecting people with Texas is one of TxDOT’s key missions,” said Caroline Mays, director of planning and modal programs. “The plan aims to articulate the transit needs for the entire state of Texas and to come up with strategies and solutions to address those needs.”

The task of developing the plan brings together 77 transit providers from across the state. It’s an enormous endeavor, but one that is increasingly important as Texas experiences explosive growth. Transit is a critical component, providing access to jobs, education and training.

“It’s really a part of our economic competitiveness, ensuring that employers have employees who can access jobs rather than transportation being an impediment to economic opportunities,” Mays said.

This project is also related to the Statewide Active Transportation Plan (see story on page 19), which bridges the gap between taking transit and reaching the final destination using a micromobility option like a walking path. And these efforts will be incorporated into TxDOT’s long-range transportation plan, Connecting Texas 2050. That plan covers all modes of transit for moving people and goods.

The Statewide Active Transportation Plan must consider a lot in a state as vast as Texas. For example, urban and rural areas present differing challenges. Dense urban areas need bike and pedestrian facilities as well as rail like CapMetro’s Red Line in Austin or Trinity Metro’s TEXRail in the DFW Metroplex. More spread-out suburban and rural areas might be better suited to buses.

The plan will be exploring these issues and more to discover potential solutions to help accommodate demand. ■

Story contributed by the Public Transportation Division

GETTING THE TEXAN ACROSS THE ROAD

with an active transportation system

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

As Texas continues to claim its place as one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, the Public Transportation Division is working on developing a blueprint to improve non-motorized mobility options to ensure Texans can safely and comfortably get to their places of work, education, residence, health care and elsewhere.

Under the umbrella of its Statewide Active Transportation Plan, the division is expected to deliver a series of recommendations by year's end to ensure Texans and Texas can keep pace with the state's growth and keep people and business moving.



Last fall, the Statewide Active Transportation Plan team attended the Mighty Texas Dog Walk to get feedback from the public about their priorities. Photo provided by CD&P

“Active and multimodal transportation options are vital to the continued growth and economic success of the state of Texas,” said Eric Gleason, Public Transportation Division director.

As part of that effort, the division is in the process of eliciting input from the public and district staff as it develops a blueprint to improve modes of transport that are typically human powered, including bicycling, walking, rolling or other modes of non-motorized transportation. Modes may also include smaller

electric-powered micromobility options such as e-scooters and e-bikes.

With every trip from A to B starting with action taken by a pedestrian, improved and safer street crossings and increased accessibility for bikes or e-scooters contribute to TxDOT's broader goal of improved mobility and safety.

The division is developing the plan with a view toward providing a framework that will provide communities with sustainable alternatives to driving.

Active and multimodal transportation options are vital to the continued growth and economic success of the state of Texas.

ERIC GLEASON

Public Transportation Division director

To date, division staff have conducted a series of open houses on active transportation as they continue to take the measure of community needs and interests. Over the course of their community engagement, staff heard from many Texans who placed safety and connectivity at the top of their priority list.

While talking about creating safer conditions for pedestrians on arterial roadways, one Amarillo resident noted the many potential areas for active transportation to enable connection to businesses.

Although using active transportation is a choice for some, for others, it is the only option. Active transportation infrastructure can connect residents to employment centers, key amenities, schools and health care facilities. By prioritizing active transportation, Texas can ensure mobility for all its residents.

The Statewide Active Transportation Plan will include input from district staff. The division will hold another round of community engagement this fall. ■

Story contributed by the Public Transportation Division

RESOURCES CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and whether you're experiencing heightened moments of stress or facing life's challenges, reaching out for help can be pivotal for your overall well-being. However, finding what works best for you can take some trial and error.

TxDOT employees have two primary benefits available to aid them in finding help: the Employee Assistance Program through Alliance Work Partners and the mental health coverage within the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas medical plan.

The Employee Assistance Program is available to employees, their spouses, partners and children under 27. Anyone living in the employee's household may also participate. The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas medical plan is available to employees and dependents who are subscribed to the HealthSelect health plan.

As part of the Employee Assistance Program, individuals can receive eight short-term counseling sessions per problem, per year. In-person or virtual counseling options are available. These services are free and confidential. TxDOT does not receive any identifying information from Alliance Work Partners.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas offers a variety of mental health support services to subscribers, including access to:

- Virtual mental health visits through the digital health care platforms MDLIVE or Doctor On Demand. Both online resources let you schedule virtual appointments with a selection of mental health professionals to find the best fit for you. Sessions are free and unlimited for subscribers. Consumer Directed Health Select participants pay 20% coinsurance after the annual deductible is met for these visits.

- Crisis support with the Mental Health Support Line at 800-252-8039. This line is free and available at any time for immediate help to find resources for you or your covered dependents.
- Phone support with the Mental Health Care Management Program at 800-252-8039. This free program provides access to a team of mental health clinicians by phone to provide extra support and guidance on various mental-health-related issues. This can be helpful if you or a loved one has recently received a mental health diagnosis and need help navigating the condition. Hours are 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Central time Monday to Friday.
- Appointments with a mental health provider. Those on the HealthSelect plan who see an in-network provider will owe a \$25 co-pay per visit. Those on the Consumer Directed HealthSelect plan will owe 20% coinsurance after meeting their annual deductible. There is no limit to these visits. Subscribers can locate an in-network provider near them through the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas online portal.

Finding the best care option is highly personal. Consider your needs and how long you think you'd like to see a provider. Also think about what you're able to spend and if you prefer in-person or virtual care to decide which approach is best for you.

To learn more about mental health resources available to TxDOT employees, visit the Mental Health Resource Guide. ■



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

WHERE AM I?

Here is a photo depicting an identifiable landmark you may have seen in your travels around Texas. If you think you know what this is a photo of or know where it was taken, send an email to TNideas@txdot.gov. Deadline for submissions is May 24.



Identified:



Congratulations to our first identifier Joseph Hagler (LFK)

Last edition's photo featured the Bishop's Palace in Galveston. It's an ornate Victorian-style house made all of stone that was sturdy enough to withstand the great hurricane of 1900.

Others identifying the photo were Andrew Lee (ALD), Chris Cowen (SJT), Meredith Worthen (ENV), Lyndol Irby (TRV), Keith Tinsley (BMT), Kim Deal (LFK), Nora Ochoa (PRO), Keven Barrett (HOU), Ryan Sweeney (YKM), Valerie Followell (TRV), Robert Smoak (BMT), Brad Manthei (BRY) and Drew Robinson (AUS). ■

UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

May 23
**TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING**
(Austin)

May 27
MEMORIAL DAY
(All agencies closed)

June 19
EMANCIPATION DAY
(Minimal staff required)

June 27
**TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING**
(Austin)

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT TAKES

safety home

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT



Corpus Christi District staff and volunteers at a safety event last year pose with the Rollover Convincer, a way to help kids, teens and parents understand the importance of using safety belts. Photo by David Pallotti

The Corpus Christi District recently launched an initiative to bring TxDOT's strong safety culture to all aspects of life.

At TxDOT, Mission Zero strives to create a safe work zone and workplace resulting in zero incidents, zero injuries, zero lost time and zero fatalities by keeping safety at the forefront of all we say and do.

In addition to Mission Zero, Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries at the local and regional level. TxDOT has adopted a goal to reach zero deaths on our roadways by 2050.

To help with these efforts, the Corpus Christi District introduced an initiative called Take Safety Home. Conceived by Stephanie Christina, district public engagement specialist, the Take Safety Home initiative provides a special focus each month that encourages district employees to take action at work, at home and in their communities.

The Take Safety Home message is presented at regular meetings throughout the district, such as each

section's monthly safety meeting and the maintenance supervisors meeting.

The topic of the message changes depending on the safety message being featured for that month, such as #EndTheStreakTX, safety seat inspection events and National Night Out, just to name a few.

Along with the safety message, presenters highlight opportunities to serve at community events. Volunteers attend these events and spread TxDOT's message of safety to the communities in their district. Through these messages and community events, the Take Safety Home initiative is the Corpus Christi District's local outreach to help Texas reach the goal of zero roadway deaths.

This program is not a replacement of current safety efforts but is a supplement to those programs and meetings.

With more than 500 employees in the Corpus Christi District, the potential snowball effect of Take Safety Home could make a real impact to the safety on our roads. ■

Story contributed by Rickey Dailey

Leo Flores

HOUSTON DISTRICT

Leo Flores

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Leo Flores joined the Houston District in 2023 as a public information officer after serving the Harris County Precinct 1 Constable's Office for six years in a similar role. He is a recent graduate of Texas Tech University, where he earned a master's degree in communication. His experience includes work as an associate producer and assignment editor for several television stations in Houston. Outside of work, he enjoys going to the movies, concerts and Tex-Mex dining spots.

When folks visit Houston, what restaurant do you tell them to try?

Ninfa's is the classic Mexican restaurant in Houston. Try the fajitas.

What are you reading now?

I recently read *Atomic Habits* by James Clear

What do you love about your job?

I love working with people from around the community and being able to tell TxDOT's story. The work we do is very important. Being able to share that mission with the public is what is best about my job.

Who do you enjoy spending time with outside of work?

My family. On Sundays, I'll visit my mom and my brothers and sisters will be there, too.

Are you from a big family?

I have 12 brothers and sisters in total. But all of my siblings are older, so I was kind of like an only child but with 12 brothers and sisters.

What hobbies do you enjoy?

I like portrait photography and cinematography. Before the pandemic, I made a few short horror films. I love all kinds of music, especially '80s.

Is there a filmmaker you admire?

I'm a big fan of cinema so I go to the movies a lot. Stanley Kubrick is one of my favorite directors.



Photo by Gabriel Adame

The Smiths or The Cure?

I'd say The Cure because they seem more eclectic to me. You can put them on and just let their music play.

What's something about you that would surprise people?

I am a sucker for romantic comedies. *Pretty Woman* is an all-time favorite. The slightest sappy thing will make me cry, even in commercials. I'm a teddy bear.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

Mexico City because it's got a good mix of the old and the new. It has both old architecture and new skyscrapers. I'd love to see the Museum of Anthropology and Chapultepec Castle. And the street food is supposed to be great! ■

All Across TxDOT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

HOUSTON DISTRICT

Houston District wins national award for quality in asphalt paving

Durwood Greene Construction Co. and American Materials Inc. of Stafford, Texas recently won a 2023 Quality in Construction Award for excellent asphalt pavement from the National Asphalt Pavement Association. The award was for their work on FM 362 in Waller County as part of the Houston District's annual rehabilitation and preventive maintenance program.

The project was designed by the Fort Bend/Waller Area Office design team. The project was also selected for the 2023 TxDOT/TXAPA Quality Asphalt Pavement Award in the Specialty Mixes Division Category. ■



The Houston District won a 2023 Quality in Construction Award for the work of the Fort Bend/Waller Area Office design team and contractors Durwood Greene Construction Co. and American Materials Inc. Photo by Danny Perez

AUSTIN DISTRICT

Austin District provides valuable employment opportunities

The Austin District's front lawn was recently transformed into a bustling venue at the "I Built This" Workforce Rangers Job Fair. The district collaborated with the Associated General Contractors of Texas and the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association to present the event.

The job fair provided an opportunity for TxDOT and vendors to connect face-to-face with job seekers. Vendors offered a diverse range of employment including accounting, record keeping, drivers and many more nontraditional construction jobs.

"Our district team and our industry partners have provided a great platform to showcase the diverse opportunities our industry has to offer," said the district's Deputy District Engineer Mike Arellano. "With the amount of work in Central Texas and around the state, the industry can guarantee a long, beneficial career."

The collaborative effort is in response to a persistent shortage of qualified candidates and a broader lack of awareness regarding the transportation industry's lucrative job prospects.

"The demand for workers to help us build the necessary transportation infrastructure to address our booming region is only going to increase over the next decade or so," said Austin District Engineer Tucker Ferguson. "We are pleased to team with our industry partners recruiting folks for all our staffing needs providing good paying jobs that will help our region continue to grow and prosper."

This is the second "I Built This" Workforce Rangers Job Fair hosted by the Austin District and its partners. ■



The Austin District recently hosted the "I Built This" Workforce Rangers Job Fair. Photo provided by the Austin District

DESIGN AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISIONS

New scoring tool uses data to enhance safety

The Design and Information Technology divisions recently launched a new web-based “Safer by Design” Safety Scoring Tool used for urban intersections and segments. TxDOT and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute developed the Safer by Design tool to provide a straightforward methodology to incorporate data-driven safety considerations into the roadway design process. The goal is to prevent crashes and reduce fatalities and injuries on Texas roads.

The new Safer by Design tool will replace the Excel-based Safety Scoring Tool for urban intersections.

Some benefits of the new tool include:

- A web-based application with automatic updates so users will have the most up-to-date roadway safety information.
- Inclusion of the previous urban intersections tool with new urban segments features to maximize roadway safety.
- A database that will save all submitted projects.
- Reporting to show safety improvements.

The new web-based scoring tool launched in February. The existing Excel-based tool for rural two-lane and rural multi-lane roadways will still be used. In the future, these will be added to the new web-based tool. The current Excel-based urban intersections tool will be used for projects through August 2024 letting. Applicable urban intersections and segments projects for September 2024 letting will be processed through the new web-based tool.

Check out the Safer by Design page on Crossroads for helpful tips and additional resources. Contact Khalid Jamil at Khalid.Jamil@txdot.gov for more information. ■

HOUSTON DISTRICT

TxDOT leaders share insights with Houston District’s young engineers

Executive Director Marc Williams led a discussion in January with more than 65 of the Houston District’s engineering assistants, who work in various sections at the district’s headquarters as well as area offices in the six-county region of the Houston district.

Engineering assistants at TxDOT rotate between design, construction and traffic operations sections to gain vital experience before deciding which aspect of engineering to pursue. Their work for the department is supervised by a licensed professional engineer.

Williams provided a wealth of knowledge about TxDOT and shared his four focus areas for the agency: safety, stewardship, delivery and innovation. Williams encouraged the group to continue developing their skills as they continue their journey to become the department’s future leaders as well as assisting with the development of fellow co-workers.

One engineer expressed his hope to see similar gatherings offered in the future.

“I believe that opportunities such as this should happen regularly,” said Derek Fregia, engineering assistant and president of Young Engineers Society, Houston District. “Having an opportunity to directly engage with high-level leadership is important for an agency to function smoothly and effectively.” ■



Marc Williams met with engineering assistants in the Houston District in January.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

New employee resources group launches

The Human Resources Division is launching a new Employee Resource Group focusing on disability, mental health and neurodivergence.

Currently, the Talent Acquisition and Employee Resources Group Section within the Human Resources Division maintains six Employee Resource groups. These six groups were established based on their shared characteristics. They help provide a sense of community for groups of individuals and their allies. They are:

- Asian ERG
- Black Employee Network (BEN)
- Connecting TxDOT Women (CTW)
- Hispanic Leadership and Advancement (HLAA)
- TxDOT Military Veterans (TMV)
- TxDOT Pride

Since the inception of these ERGs, division staff had multiple inquiries about a possible ERG focusing on disability, mental health and neurodivergence. The new group launched in February. Its goal, like the other ERGs, is to promote a sense of community and belonging and support inclusivity in the workplace.

Everyone is welcome to join the group: both those who might have a shared identity and those who would like to join as allies in support of the group. To join, visit the Employee Resource Group site on SharePoint and complete the form. For more information, contact David.Davalos@txdot.gov. ■

Traffic gets eclipsed in Texas

Thank you to everyone who worked hard during the total solar eclipse on April 8 to direct traffic, drive courtesy patrols and help the entire state enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Visit Crossroads to see a photo slideshow of TxDOT employees around the state working the historic eclipse. ■

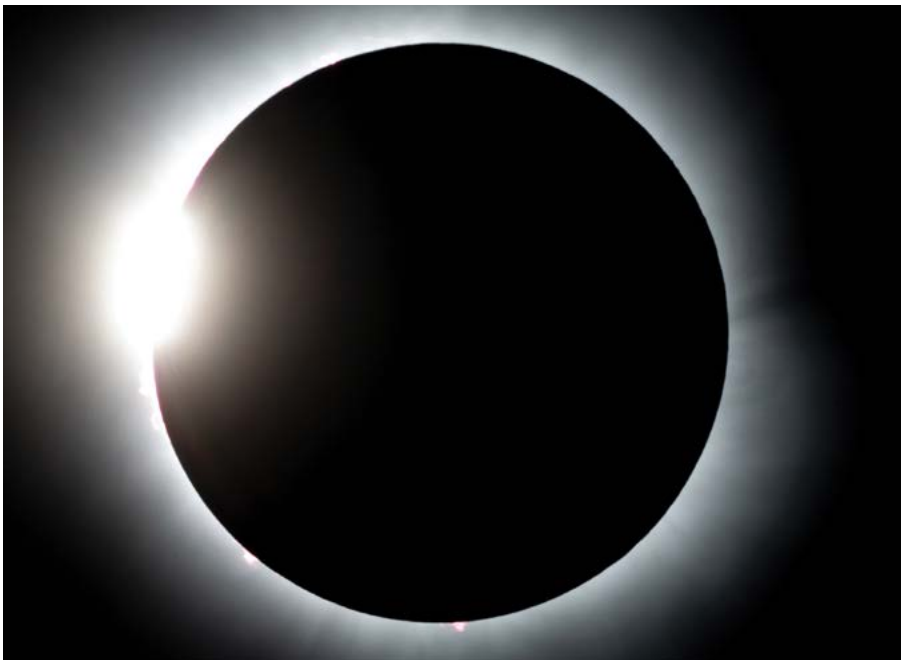


Photo by Michael Amador

Singleton named Fleet Operations Division director

Jacob Singleton is the new director of the Fleet Operations Division starting in March. Singleton joined TxDOT in 1995 and has held positions from heavy equipment mechanic and haul truck driver to Operations Section director. ■

Townsend named Chief Audit and Compliance Officer

Parsons Townsend was named TxDOT's chief audit and compliance officer in March. Townsend has served as TxDOT's Compliance Division director since 2022. He has worked with the Texas State Auditor's Office and Texas Health and Human Services. He is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. ■

Share your wildflower photos

Submit your best wildflower photos for a chance to be published in the TxDOT Wildflower Guide. Photos will be accepted online through June 30. Pictures should be original work by TxDOT employees and not include people or animals. Close ups of the wildflowers are preferred. Visit the Wildflower Photos page on Crossroads to learn more. ■

Hurricane season begins June 1

The 2024 Atlantic Hurricane season begins June 1 and will end on Nov. 30. Be ready by preparing a family emergency plan and a disaster supply kit, including shelf-stable food, fresh water, batteries and a weather radio. TxDOT.gov has links to evacuation maps and contraflow videos. Drivetexas.org provides Texans with timely information about road conditions. ■

A LUFKIN CAREER legacy continues

LUFKIN DISTRICT

In the Lufkin District, three generations of women from the same family have chosen TxDOT as a career.

Betty G. Peavy, daughter Cathy Dunn Loerch and granddaughter Regina Loerch have all either retired from or are currently working in the Lufkin District.

Betty began her career in 1982 at TxDOT in the San Augustine Maintenance Office as office manager, retiring in 2004 after 22 years of service. She chose TxDOT because she had heard about the great benefits the agency offered.

“My career was very beneficial and one that I enjoyed very much,” she said. “I made so many lifelong friends. I feel that I have a lot invested in TxDOT because of family. TxDOT is a great place to work.”

Traffic Systems Administrator Cathy Dunn Loerch currently serves as the design lead for the district’s Central Design Section. Cathy began her career as a summer intern in the 1980s and later worked full time in the Livingston and the San Augustine area offices before moving to the district office in 2013. She has served more than 24 years in the Lufkin District.

“I have been very blessed to have found my niche as a roadway designer,” Cathy said. “The best thing about the Lufkin District is how much of a family we all are.”

At the newest end of the generational spectrum, Regina Loerch grew up hearing about TxDOT as part of her daily life. It was only natural for her to begin her service as a summer employee in 2014 in high school and then while at Stephen F. Austin State University. She is now working full time as an administrative assistant.

“My career at TxDOT so far has been a great experience and very enjoyable,” she said. “Being able to be a part of the advanced planning and public involvement team is great.”

Each family member pursues their own hobbies away from work. Betty loves to work in her flower garden.



Three generations from the same family have worked at the Lufkin District: Betty G. Peavy (left), with granddaughter Regina Loerch and daughter Cathy Dunn Loerch. Photo provided by the Loerch family

Cat, as she is known at the office, can be found near the water fishing for catfish, crappie, redfish or sharks. Regina unwinds by reading, playing video games and spending time with friends.

While they each chose different paths within TxDOT, they are all enthusiastic about the agency.

“Before Mom retired, it was nice to be able to ask her how and why things were done a particular way,” Cat said. “To learn the ropes. After a while, it was nice to have someone who could appreciate what I do. Having the chance to explain the TxDOT way to my own daughter is more than I could ask for. It is like passing down the torch.” ■

Story contributed by Rhonda Oaks

MILESTONES

MARCH SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 20 Cal W. Hays
- 10 Travis Pritchard

ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY

- 10 Elizabeth L. Bullock

AMARILLO

- 35 Darrell W. Caldwell
- 10 Jesse W. Mickler
- Jack A. Phillips
- 5 Joseph Garcia
- Matthew Jansson

ATLANTA

- 15 Rance J. Gaston
- 5 Maria R. D'Amorim Stansbery

AUSTIN

- 30 Michael A. McNabb
- 20 James J. Low
- 10 Gregorio Perez
- 5 Justin Bowman
- Barry Stribling

BEAUMONT

- 20 Richard L. Guillory Jr.
- 15 Brad L. Murray
- 5 Kimberly Guidry
- Teddy G. Hickman
- Tony Todd

BROWNWOOD

- 20 William E. McNew
- John W. West III
- 5 Joel Medina
- Jason T. Preas

BRYAN

- 5 Guy S. Dunbar
- Eric J. Harrison
- Andrew P. Neuvar
- Lindsey B. Schroeder
- Tony H. Ward II

CHILDRESS

- 5 Tyler H. Wellborn

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 Ginger R. Wilson

CONTRACT SERVICES

- 5 Bethany Hamilton

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 10 Aurora G. Rodriguez
- 5 Justin Bennett
- Raymond Pena Jr.

DALLAS

- 30 Todd S. Prestien
- 25 Miles E. Hicks
- 5 Husam Alsaad
- William J. Cuellar II
- Emily Dieu

- 5 Tomas J. Garcia

Carmino D. Gonzales
Cheryl S. Jones
James S. McCormick

EL PASO

- 20 Josie Aguilar
- 10 Tomas Mendoza Jr.
- 5 Jesus A. Castillo-Reyes

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 10 Jason M. Hogan
- Arthur Levine
- Seth T. Reed
- Maria B. Silva
- 5 Lori Rangel

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 25 Michael A. Janssen
- 10 Edwin G. Baez
- 5 Fabian Rodriguez
- Robert B. Weddle

FORT WORTH

- 35 Janet L. Crawford
- 25 John C. Cannady
- 20 Keith D. Prochnow
- Steven R. Yates
- 5 Douglas Bates
- Shawna L. Newsom

HOUSTON

- 35 Kenneth B. Paradowski
- 25 Virginia C. Conol
- Dalia Dugas
- Eric S. Hill
- 20 Rajendra P. Hada
- 15 Wilson Philip
- 10 Samuel G. Guevara
- Emily D. Perez
- Rafael M. Sebello
- 5 Joshua Bailey
- Flavio DeLaO
- Douglas L. Martin
- Pratik Patel
- Hoang M. Tran
- Kelly D. Williams
- Luo Yang

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 10 David Davalos
- Erika K. Kemp
- 5 Sabrina Bateman
- Jeffrey Oommen
- Hector Penagos
- Margaret Whitley

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 15 John L. Stokes
- 5 Jennifer Seymour

LAREDO

- 25 Juan D. Moreno
- 10 Ernesto Meza Jr.
- 5 Cynthia Garcia

LUBBOCK

- 20 German A. Vasquez
- 10 Jose Martinez
- 5 Jessie Brito
- Thomas Munoz

LUFKIN

- 25 Thomas V. Smith
- 10 Clint R. Jones

MAINTENANCE

- 5 Karla P. Santamaria

MATERIALS AND TESTS

- 30 Joseph Roche
- 20 Dale A. Hartsaw
- 10 David M. Schauer

ODESSA

- 10 Lorri A. Gandy
- Mark C. Heredia
- Brett A. Palmer
- 5 Elias Duarte
- Guadalupe Mendoza
- Jennifer H. Oreilly
- Hector D. Ortega

PARIS

- 25 Ellen E. Perry
- 20 Laurencio P. Velazquez
- 10 John C. Davis
- Christopher L. Hart

PHARR

- 30 Filiberto Valderas Jr.
- 10 Lucas Pena
- 5 Orlando A. Garza Jr.
- Monica Leal

PROCUREMENT

- 30 Dallas W. Champion
- 5 Darren Furgerson
- Ashley L. Ramirez

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT SERVICES

- 20 Rachel Santana

RIGHT OF WAY

- 30 Aldo R. Cardona
- 5 Yael Garcia

SAN ANGELO

- 10 Terence K. Patterson
- 5 Alfonso Mendoza

SAN ANTONIO

- 25 Bracey M. Keeney
- 20 Jeffrey W. Jacobs
- 15 Aldo D. Gallegos

- 10 Manuel Canales Jr.
- Ricardo A. Gonzalez
- Kevin W. Long Jr.

- 5 Richard Castanon
- Jason Gunn
- David Salas

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 5 Gregory Carlson

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 5 Ian D. Blackman
- Alexander Choy

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

- 35 John Foster

TRAVEL

- 15 Jane A. Carl
- 5 Marissa Barrera
- Angelita P. Martinez

TYLER

- 30 John Noe Jr.

WACO

- 25 Roger E. Kaska
- 20 Brent T. Zarosky
- 5 Chad Hogg
- Tony D. Mungia
- Waylon J. Pilgreen
- Jimmy W. Teal
- Abram K. VanElswyk

WICHITA FALLS

- 30 Moses Gonzales
- 20 James A. Damron
- Zachary P. Husen
- 10 Tim Burch
- Thomas W. Morrison
- 5 Billy K. Crabtree
- Thomas M. Harrison
- Vincent P. Soendker

YOAKUM

- 20 Will R. Sorensen
- 10 Stephen N. Gipson
- 5 Gary S. Crone
- Aaron W. Franke
- Miles D. Parker
- Donny L. Wills



APRIL SERVICE AWARDS

ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY

5 Juan Valles Garay

AMARILLO

5 Tamara Keesee
Timothy Whiteley
Morgan Willoughby

ATLANTA

30 Stuart J. Callison
25 Jerry E. Eaves
15 Gregory A. Ivery
Eric L. Spaniol
10 Randy McVicar

AUSTIN

30 Brian C. Dailey
30 Jay O'Donald
25 Rhonda S. Roundy
10 Keith W. Foote
Daniel Juarez
Tanli Sun
5 Aaron Dick
Rolando Frias

BRIDGE

5 Mark Bourland

BROWNWOOD

20 Michael S. Eden
5 David F. Diaz
Charles L. Maves
Colton M. Smith

BRYAN

20 Darrel Welch
5 Quinn E. Ashworth
Nathanial Hamilton
Dale A. Mackenroth
Nicholas Withers

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30 Billy S. Elliott
15 John C. Pointer
5 Ethan G. Swearingen

CIVIL RIGHTS

10 Daniel J. Williams

COMMUNICATIONS

35 Anne L. Cook
5 Adam C. Hammons

COMPLIANCE

10 Curtis J. Ganong
Lisa M. Rogers
5 Bianca Palmer

CONSTRUCTION

15 Eduardo L. Acosta Jr.

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25 Armando Bosquez
10 David Gutierrez
Brian A. Newhouse Jr.
5 Wayne Scott

DALLAS

25 Ariana Jefferson
10 Argelia Figueroa
Caleb Gentle
Robert B. Price
Jaime Sanchez
5 Brandy N. Coker
Justin Floyd
Jessie T. Kirkland III

DESIGN

25 Jennifer L. Book
5 Amanda Austin
Bulbul Ganguly

EL PASO

25 John K. Connors
Antonio Santana
15 Juan D. Reyes
Ramon A. Rojo
10 Edith G. Concha
5 Monica C. Esparza
Jorge Pena
Francisco F. Solis
Armando Villalobos Jr.
Michael S. Viramontes Jr.

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Sara E. Finch
15 Rafael M. Bejar
Justin R. Street
10 Angel P. Rubio

HOUSTON

40 Kevin D. Barrett
George R. Nichols
35 Dwayne D. Gajewski
20 Cornell W. Grice
Esteban G. Sosa
15 Michael E. Carlson
10 Betty E. Alpaugh
Vanessa M. Bosques
Jeremiah L. Fritz
James R. Reed
5 Casey A. Arredondo
Jeffery C. Carlton
Scott D. DeBerry
Rafael Flores
Michelle Howe
Michael M. Kozman
Jason S. Ruffner
John Silver
Carl W. Teague

HUMAN RESOURCES

30 Loretta D. Smith
20 Carmel A. Aguilar
5 Maria Pople

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

10 Michael K. Clayton

LAREDO

10 Christian Cano
5 Luis R. Flores Jr.

LUBBOCK

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10 Marcus Martinez
5 Renan R. Rodriguez

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30 Norma Y. Garza
20 Victor Beltran
Primitivo Munoz
Juan L. Pardo
Daniel Reyes
15 Adolfo Garza
10 Jose J. Lopez
5 Amanda B. McEachern

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT SERVICES

10 Angela M. Yokie

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

30 Delma F. Childress
5 Amanda J. Yowell

RIGHT OF WAY

10 Darby F. Venza

SAN ANGELO

10 Derek H. Shropshire
5 Elpidio J. Reyes

SAN ANTONIO

30 Troy A. Magers
10 Randall Bauer
Juan Caballero III
Matthew Hernandez
Travis Svoboda
5 Denise V. Flotte
Scott D. Nelson
Alexander C. Rios

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND INNOVATION

5 Ronald B. Bauerle

SUPPORT SERVICES

10 Joseph N. Hanson

TRAFFIC SAFETY

25 Flor M. Tamez
20 Scott E. Sims
15 Renee J. Valdez
10 Bernadine W. Moore
5 Jaimie Ailshire

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

10 Sylvia C. Mallinger
Dylan C. Muir
5 Hugo Melgoza
Jessica Lane

TRAVEL

5 Norma A. Rios

TYLER

25 Mark Driskell
20 John B. McRoberts
10 Stuart R. Withington
5 Mark W. Haase

WACO

30 Thomas E. Polansky
20 Matthew D. Nehring
10 Kenneth R. Foster
Kerry M. Ogden

WICHITA FALLS

30 Gregory Cortez
20 Dalton E. Hembree
10 Kathy A. Powell
5 Weldon G. Rains

YOAKUM

25 Dwayne L. Petras
20 Harvey G. Ehler
10 Daniel L. Meredith
5 Kelsey B. Fowlkes
Darren K. Helms
Melvin H. Rael

MILESTONES

JANUARY RETIREE AWARDS

ATLANTA

17 Dennis M. Heller

BROWNWOOD

22 Michael A. K. Rogers

BRYAN

13 Bruce L. Stulting

CONSTRUCTION

25 Brett A. Bennett

CORPUS CHRISTI

21 Delma E. Cave
James A. Foster

DALLAS

32 Kimberly A. McFadden

17 Zina White

10 Gerald L. Lones

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

23 Bobby Wortham

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

12 Susie G. Hinojosa

9 Lara Boyd

2 Melissa R. Flores

FLEET OPERATIONS

22 Dale W. Pfeil

10 Annette May Martin

FORT WORTH

25 Robert L. Hill

22 Charles P. Cox

17 James T. Scoggin

HOUSTON

21 Cynthia Lee

14 Ruben Rojas

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

2 Ana Villarreal

PARIS

17 Victor W. Carrell

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT SERVICES

19 Marialyce Luckey

SAN ANTONIO

16 Scott D. Armstrong

TYLER

10 Marcus E. Pettiford

YOAKUM

27 Kyle A. Novicke

FEBRUARY RETIREE AWARDS

ABILENE

30 Stewart J. Chapman

26 Stuart H. Jeffrey

20 Daniel Carrion

AMARILLO

27 Kelvin J. Britten

BRYAN

11 David A. Flessner

CHILDRESS

30 Billy Shawn Elliott

DALLAS

30 Damon T. White

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

29 Nnabugwu W. Ezi

27 Mack D. Ballenger

26 Leigh A. Greer

11 Amanda M. Rodriguez

FLEET OPERATIONS

18 Dalton B. Pratt

FORT WORTH

20 Steven R. Yates

11 Beverly A. O'Dell

HOUSTON

7 Yafang Lu

LAREDO

17 Arnoldo Martinez

PHARR

30 Raul E. Lopez

SAN ANGELO

17 Kevin T. Clary

SAN ANTONIO

28 Rodney K. Cantu

23 Lorenzo Morales

TRAFFIC SAFETY

26 James M. Weber

TYLER

28 Clint A. Traylor

27 Jose C. Rodriguez

IN MEMORIAM

BRIDGE DIVISION

Bill Hodon

Date of Death: 2/20/2024

Years of Service: 16

Retired: 1993

DALLAS DISTRICT

Wade Goodwin Jr.

General Transportation
Technician

Date of Death: 2/24/2024

Years of Service: 38

EL PASO DISTRICT

Joseph Lindsey

Maintenance Section Supervisor

Date of Death: 12/2/2023

Years of Service: 33

Retired: 2019

FORT WORTH DISTRICT

Ricki LeDay

Safety Officer

Date of Death: 3/3/2024

Years of Service: 5

LUBBOCK DISTRICT

Elliott Bazan

Construction Inspector

Date of Death: 3/21/2024

Years of Service: 3

Christopher Salazar

Transportation

Maintenance Specialist

Date of Death: 3/27/2024

Years of Service: 13

PHARR DISTRICT

Michael Calderas

General Transportation

Technician

Date of Death: 3/26/2024

Service Time: 4 months

BRIDGE INDUSTRY GROUPS NAME TxDOT Owner of the Year for 2024

Innovation abounds in the steel bridge industry, but TxDOT rises above the rest.

The American Institute of Steel Construction and the National Steel Bridge Alliance recently recognized TxDOT with the inaugural Owner of the Year award.

The brand-new award recognizes the driving force behind extraordinary bridges: extraordinary owners, whose vision and dedication to the public keep America moving.

“TxDOT isn’t just implementing best practices for designing and building steel bridges – it is defining how an owner can maximize the potential of steel,” said NSBA Senior Director for Market Development Jeff Carlson. “Recent projects like the remarkably economical Brazos River Bridge demonstrate how TxDOT’s longstanding investment in steel bridge research is paying dividends for Texans, today and tomorrow.” ■



TxDOT was named Owner of the Year for its implementation of steel bridges like the Brazos River Bridge in Waco. Photo by Michael Amador

YOUR TURN

Who is your favorite superhero and why?

BEAUMONT DISTRICT



PORTER BURNS
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
SYSTEMS ANALYST

“My favorite superhero has always been Luke Skywalker. He was the staple of my childhood and literally saved the galaxy, which sets a high bar for a single person!” ■

BROWNWOOD DISTRICT



LISA TIPTON
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

“Black Widow is my favorite superhero. She is all about taking care of business, and her character has overcome tons of adversity.” ■

FORT WORTH DISTRICT



KOREY COBURN
PARKER/PALO PINTO
AREA ENGINEER

“I liked Batman growing up because of the Batmobile. Man, that was a hot rod!” ■



UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

APPLY FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE BY JUNE 15

Apply now for the Fall 2024 semester and seize your chance to be among the select participants awarded tuition assistance.



"I enthusiastically endorse the program and wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone interested in obtaining their degree. It's never too late to start your journey to success!"

Martha Miranda
University of Texas -
Rio Grande Valley/Accounting



"I would definitely recommend the program to others. A degree will always be beneficial and if you can get financial assistance to help pursue that degree, it is a win-win."

Colton Smith
University of Texas -
Arlington/Civil Engineering



"The Tuition Assistance Program is an invaluable resource. If you are considering a degree, don't wait any longer. Take advantage of the flexibility the program offers to meet your goals."

Jennifer Levine
Western Governors University/
Business Administration



"I liked it so much I want to go back for my master's degree!"

Nathanael Grudier
University of Texas -
Tyler/Civil Engineering



"The Tuition Assistance Program staff were very helpful throughout. I wanted to quit more than once but having a tremendous support group kept me going."

Rendy Drews
McLennan Community College/
General Engineering



"For those considering pursuing a degree while working, my advice is simple: seize the opportunity. While it may seem daunting at first, the rewards far outweigh the challenges."

Arturo Lopez
University of Texas -
Rio Grande Valley/Civil Engineering



"The Tuition Assistance Program is not only an investment in yourself personally, but also an investment in your career with TxDOT."

Francisco Galvez
University of Houston -
Downtown/Applied Administration

A limited number of participants will be competitively selected per semester by the TAP Selection Committee. Visit the Tuition Assistance Program page on SharePoint for more information.