

# TEXAS HISTORIC BRIDGES

SPRING 2016

## PROJECT MISSION STATEMENT:

Identify ways to retain historic truss bridges as viable assets open to vehicular traffic or repurposed for new uses.

## JOIN OUR ONGOING DIALOGUE:

Texas Historical Commission Real Places 2016 in Austin

**June 13-15**

*TxDOT historians will discuss opportunities for CHCs to engage in the Section 106 planning process. Results will be in the Summer issue of this newsletter*

TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming Conference in Houston

**June 15-17**

*Transportation professionals will explore the latest in planning and program development, including public involvement.*

TxDOT Environmental Conference in Corpus Christi

**September 13-14**

*Transportation professionals will explore the latest in environmental tools and guidance, including public involvement.*



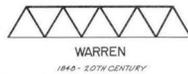
## THE ROAD TO SUCCESS...

Figuring out what to do with old bridges in your community is a long but important process. Your input over the past few months confirmed that some metal truss bridges are valued. They could be considered for various other purposes, such as pedestrian bridges or park installations. Public input that affects outcomes happens at many levels and takes many routes, one of which is through the work you do at the local level. As you've heard many times, "all preservation is local," so your work at the local level can help shape the future of these bridges.



*Bedstead Truss, Wolters Park, Schulenburg*

Of the approximately 150 historic metal truss bridges still in vehicular service, three out of four are owned by county or city governments. TxDOT's role in their management is limited to inspecting them annually to assess their ongoing safety and channeling funding to those in danger of failing. Here are some key mile posts along the long road to preserving your historic metal truss bridges:



WARREN  
1848 - 20TH CENTURY

### 1. Know your resources

Do you know how many historic truss bridges survive in your community? Down to just one modest Warren Pony truss or do you have a rare Whipple truss?

- Locate truss bridges in your **community**
- Learn about the history of truss bridges in **Texas**
- Learn about the types of **trusses**
- Learn how to identify parts of a truss **bridge**



K - TRUSS  
EARLY 20TH CENTURY

### 2. Monitor the health of the bridge

TxDOT engineers visit your bridge every two years to conduct inspections.

- You may contact the TxDOT Area Engineer's office or the county road administrator to check in on the results
- Learn about common historic truss bridge problems and solutions in the **toolkits**
- Devise a plan for volunteers to visit the bridge more often to note changes in its condition such as flood debris or vehicular impacts

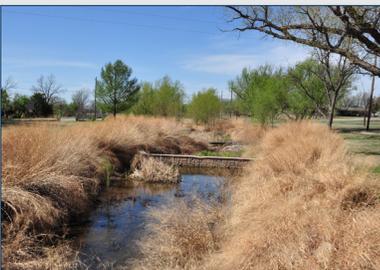
(Story continued on Page 2)

## SUCCESS STORY!

In Baylor County, a member of the County Historical Commission crafted a passionate response to TxDOT's notification of a proposed replacement of the Lake Creek truss bridge. The heartfelt letter detailed the bridge's history and value as the last Warren pony truss bridge remaining in the county, which was built to replace an earlier bridge destroyed by a flood. Although the bridge was ultimately replaced, the Baylor CHC worked with the City of Seymour to find a place for the new bridge in a city park. TxDOT, Baylor County, and the City reached an agreement to move the bridge into the park for future generations to enjoy. The hard work of the CHC made this a successful preservation project. To view other bridges currently available for this type of partnership effort, visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov), keyword "adopt a bridge."



Original location over Lake Creek



Proposed location in Seymour Park



Erosion at the original bridge

## THE ROAD TO SUCCESS, CONTINUED

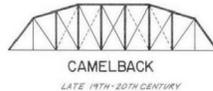


### 3. Inform yourself

TxDOT presents information about upcoming projects to the public in a variety of ways:

- Find your **bridge**
- Attend public meetings in your community
- Check the TxDOT Project Tracker for current and upcoming **projects** and view projects by County
- Know your **District** Environmental Coordinator and Area Engineer

### 4. Inform decision-makers



Decisions about county bridges are made at the local level. Decisions range from the distribution of maintenance money and staff, to determinations of repair, to deciding it is time to replace a bridge. Stay in touch with your county judge or precinct commissioner so they recognize that people in the community

care about their historic bridges. You could send them an annual report, for example, noting your observations and concerns.



### 5. Foster a constituency

Make sure your community understands the value of your bridge heritage by helping tell the story:

- Share bridge histories on your website (see Denton County for **example**)
- Do the research to obtain historical designation
- Create newsletters or contribute articles or editorials to the local newspaper featuring your engineering heritage;
- Work with local teachers to create curricula for history of roads or bridges or use in math and science curricula;

Visit the Texas Historical Commission website for more **ideas**

### 6. Communicate with TxDOT

When a project is planned in your community, be responsive when we ask for your opinions and help! Local input can:



- Identify historic properties important to the community
- Direct TxDOT to appropriate resources, such as local park officials

- Examine different alternatives for a project
- Assist TxDOT in finding a new use for a historic bridge
- Provide feedback to help shape the project outcome

Here is a more detailed **explanation** from our partners at the Texas Historical Commission.