

TEXAS HISTORIC BRIDGES

SUMMER/FALL 2016

PROJECT MISSION STATEMENT:

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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Bridge Outcomes Webinar

Dec. 14, 2016

TxDOT, the THC, and the Historic Bridge Foundation will highlight projects involving moving bridges to new locations for continued use and preservation.

TxDOT's Centennial Celebration

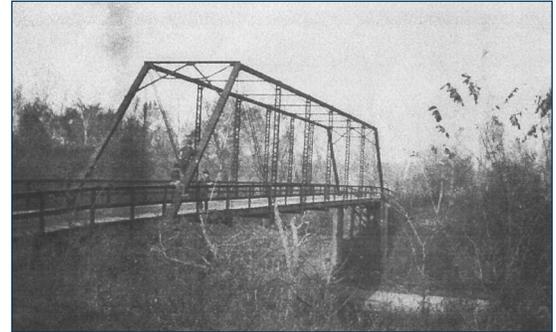
2017

Celebrate Texas' road heritage with events throughout the state and online! Keep your eyes peeled for more information!



PRATT TRUSS FEATURED IN SHARED STORY

"Ed Vandervort can tell what a beef club does, where the first mile of graveled road was laid in Dallas County, and about momentous trips to the city of Dallas from his former home at Eagle Ford in the days when it really was a ford of the Trinity River." Thus begins a 1935 newspaper article on the life and times of Vandervort, a Dallas County Commissioner at the turn of the 20th Century. TxDOT learned Mr. Vandervort's story from his great-great-grandson Mike Vandervoort.



First truss bridge at Eagle Ford

Mike brought newspaper clippings about his ancestor to TxDOT's Abilene Metal Truss Bridge Open House. Mike responded to TxDOT's call to "Share Your Story" on the history of truss bridges in Texas. Historic bridge enthusiasts brought images and stories of truss bridges across the state to share untold stories about our roads and bridges.

Although the first truss bridge at Eagle Ford no longer exists, the story of Mr. Vandervort and the Dallas County Commissioners constructing a new bridge is part of Texas' engineering heritage. The c. 1895 Pratt through truss bridge was the first crossing to the Dallas side of the Trinity River. Mr. Vandervort also improved the road leading up to the bridge by using gravel from his lands to pave the road. Pratt trusses, invented in 1844 by brothers Thomas and Caleb Pratt, were popular bridge designs during this time period. Pratt trusses could span long distances, making that bridge design a shoo-in for Mr. Vandervort's crossing.

And a beef club? That is a group of families sharing in the meat from a cow slaughtered every Friday.

"Share Your Story" Statistics:

TxDOT, in partnership with Texas Historical Commission and Historic Bridge Foundation, conducted open houses last summer to continue the conversation with the public about management and preservation options for historic metal truss bridges. At one station, community members were asked to "share your story" with photographs, artifacts and written or verbal comments. Here are some of the results. These stories are archived at 4 local libraries and with the Texas Historical Commission.

46 bridges

Over 150 photographs

69 newspaper articles

17 people shared their stories

IDEAS ABOUT AT CHC TRAINING

This past spring and summer, TxDOT historians and archeologists went on the road to talk with nearly 200 County Historical Commissioners (CHCs) from 63 counties. Eight days of training, brainstorming, and discussions led to new and strengthened relationships between TxDOT and the CHCs. TxDOT gleaned valuable input on how to best communicate with CHCs, through more reader-friendly letters and proposed quarterly meetings with TxDOT District staff. We brainstormed the best ways to “preserve” historic properties through creative outreach to the community. For example, Milam CHC plans to publish a book on historic bridges in the county. During one CHC regional meeting, TxDOT reconnected with the Wharton CHC on an important historic bridge project in the county. Thanks to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) for partnering with us on the training!



Caddo Mounds State Park, Alto



National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg



Real Places Conference, Austin

ZEPHYR BRIDGE



This c. 1935 Warren pony truss bridge is in the small community of Zephyr, Brown County. Located on CR 306 over Blanket Creek, the bridge connected the Zephyr post office and residents to Brownwood and beyond. While not many buildings remain from early Zephyr, the Warren pony bridge is a reminder of the history of the community.

SOUTH LLANO RIVER BRIDGE, JUNCTION, TX

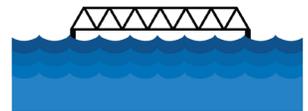


Three changes to road name



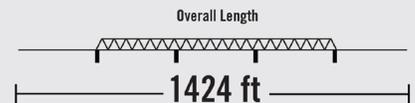
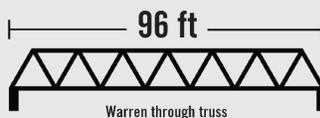
\$300,000

Cost when it opened in 1937

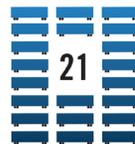


1935 Flood Damages the old bridge

MEASUREMENTS



Tons of steel



Freight cars used to haul the steel



24 hours / day

Patrolled for Terrorism During WWII

The Kimble County Historical Commission shared their research on the South Llano River Bridge with us during our truss open houses.