ON THE ROAD TO ZERO DEATHS

An average of 10 people die each day on Texas roads. This unacceptable statistic is at the heart of TxDOT’s goal toward zero deaths by 2050.
Texas has made a name for itself in our nation’s capital, and not necessarily in a way that we like. Among every state that contributes to the Federal Highway Trust Fund, Texas has the unfortunate distinction of being the last “donor” state, sending more of its federal fuels tax dollars to Washington than it gets back in return.

The trust fund collects revenues from states, mostly in the form of our federal taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel. Those collections finance projects across the country, and in return, states get some of those dollars back to plan for their state projects. In the land of federal financing, that’s called an apportionment. And here’s the rub: Texas contributes more than any other state, and its apportionment is proportionately less than every state.

This inequity happens because federal formulas that are used to calculate reimbursements aren’t based on current data, like population and number of lane miles.

Under current transportation legislation — the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act — those metrics aren’t updated annually. Instead, the FAST Act bases a state’s apportionment on what it received in 2015, which was based on what a state received in 2009. And to add insult to injury, that funding is tied to formulas that were created in 2005.

In effect, states receive funding that is based on formulas that were frozen in 2005 and data that hasn’t been updated since 2009, a real detriment for Texas that has consistently grown in population.

In dollars and cents, Texas will give the Highway Trust Fund $3.99 billion in federal fuel taxes and other deposits, and get $3.79 billion in return this federal fiscal year. And what’s more, of the billions of general fund revenue that is used to support the trust fund, Texas will effectively receive none.

This isn’t lost on our Texas Congressional delegation. Members from both chambers are championing the state’s cause for fairness as Congress considers transportation funding measures this year, including reauthorization of federal funding legislation that will expire next year.

Of course, we’ll have to wait and see what finally happens, but if you want to learn more about how this affects Texas, read more on our website, txdot.gov/federalfairshare. Just search for federal rate of return for Texas.

Federal funding challenges notwithstanding, Texas is getting our best service everyday. Thanks for your hard work.
The tragic truth is that since Nov. 7, 2000, there has not been one day without a death on Texas roads. An average of 10 people die each day on our roads, too. TxDOT’s goal to bring this number of needless, preventable deaths to zero by 2050 is ambitious, but it’s a mission we all have a responsibility to take on.
Ferguson named district engineer for Austin

Tucker Ferguson was named the new Austin District Engineer in June. Ferguson comes from the Beaumont District where he has served as district engineer since 2011. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown and served in a variety of positions with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation before joining TxDOT.

Communications wins big

The Communications Division recently won three awards for its products. The Creative Services Section took home two Telly Awards for two videos. Last year’s Short Course video “West Texas Energy Transportation Challenges” received a silver and “Play for the Day,” developed for the Occupational Safety Division, received a bronze. The Telly Awards honor excellence in video and television. In addition, TN Magazine received a 2019 Communicator Award of Distinction in the category of Employee Publication-Magazine for Corporate Communication. The Communicator Awards is the leading international awards program recognizing big ideas in marketing and communications.

New urgent notification system

TxDOT will launch a new urgent notification system for employees in the next few months. The system replaces the current notification system that allows employees to sign up to receive texts or emails regarding department-related information in emergency situations. Employees will have to re-enter their information in the new system so watch for more information.

New Crossroads rollout continues

The redesign of TxDOT’s intranet, Crossroads, continues to rollout with the second wave completed in May. The updated pages provide better content visibility with a streamlined design. Pages are easy to navigate and the design is more consistent with TxDOT’s external web site. Only the look of the pages is changed. The content remains the same. Look for the third and final wave, including a redesigned homepage, in August.

Fulton retires from Aviation Division

After 27 years of service to TxDOT, David S. Fulton, director of the Aviation Division, retired on June 30. Fulton joined TxDOT in 1992 after serving with the Tennessee Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics for 16 years. A retired captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve, Fulton served on active duty for more than 11 years as a naval officer with pilot designation. He earned a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Vanderbilt University; a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Tennessee, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Nashville School of Law. Dan Harmon, director of the Maritime Division, will serve as interim director for the Aviation Division.
The Houston District along with Houston TranStar and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute won two prestigious awards from ITS Texas during its annual meeting last November.

ITS Texas is an organization that promotes and enhances public safety and community welfare through research, development and implementation of plans and programs to reduce motor vehicle deaths and injuries while also improving mobility.

The awards are given in recognition of an outstanding project or other contribution in the field of intelligent transportation systems. They focus on policy, planning, design, deployment, research and education.

The first award recognized the development and integration of the I-10 responsive frontage road arterial progression system. This is an automated system that extends the time that frontage roads are free-flowing based on real-time freeway data captured during congestion. The goal of the system is to lessen overall system delay.

TxDOT, Houston TranStar and TTI also won an award for making information about flooding on local roadways more readily available. While TranStar’s real-time traffic map provides information from cameras along Houston freeways to alert motorists to flooded locations, no such warnings existed on local roads outside the freeway camera network. To develop this tool, TranStar, TTI and TxDOT worked with the Harris County Flood Control District to overlay rainfall sensor data on the TranStar traffic map. This information, paired with TranStar’s roadway data, helps predict which areas are at risk for localized street flooding.

In July 2018, Houston TranStar released this innovative roadway flood warning system to help travelers plan trips and avoid flooded local roadways during heavy rain. The feature is available on TranStar’s real-time traffic map website and mobile app.

“It is always TxDOT’s goal to improve mobility and enhance safety,” said Ugonna Ughanze, director of transportation operations for the Houston District. “With this emerging technology and the combined efforts of multiple agencies sharing information, we are improving safety for the traveling public by providing potentially life-saving information to motorists during heavy rainfall events.”
FM 2900 replacement bridge opens in only seven months

Seven months and eight days. That’s how long it took to build a brand-new, 1,200-foot bridge. On May 24, TxDOT, local leaders, political leaders and the community celebrated a ribbon-cutting for the new FM 2900 bridge in Kingsland. Flooding in the hill country washed away the previous one last October. The loss of that bridge severely affected the surrounding area. First responders’ routes had to be redirected causing delays and many homeowners were cut off from the other side of town. What used to be a five-minute trip to get bread at the grocery store now took about an hour.

In response, TxDOT requested an emergency certification to get a new bridge built as fast as possible.

Hundreds of people came for the ribbon-cutting celebration. Firetrucks from both sides of the river met in the middle symbolizing the reconnection of emergency services and the community.

Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr. was there for the celebration along with Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz.

“This has been a very, very successful project,” former Austin District Engineer Terry McCoy said. “It surpassed even my highest expectations.”

Houston District hosts U.S. 290 Fair and Fest

Last December, TxDOT joined U.S. 290 corridor business owners and residents to celebrate the approaching completion of U.S. 290 program construction. The U.S. 290 Fair and Fest, which was held at METRO’s West Little York Park and Ride, celebrated the numerous milestones finished to date on U.S. 290, one project section of which was recently named a WASHTO submission for America’s Transportation Awards.

Houston District Engineer Quincy Allen thanked the people who live and work along the U.S. 290 corridor:

“The folks that really make this possible are the business owners here,” Allen said. “We anticipate that commerce will increase and be worth the effort that we put forward together.”

Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan noted that TxDOT made available funding pay off for U.S. 290 motorists in a big way.

“The funding strategy employed by TxDOT advanced the construction of the U.S. 290 corridor such that some portions of the roadway were actually completed two decades earlier than originally planned, which is an incredible job,” said Ryan.
One bridge to replace two on SH 8

Two narrow bridges on SH 8 crossing the upper end of Wright Patman Lake in the Atlanta District will be replaced over the next few years according to plans approved in April.

“We will be replacing the two bridges crossing Lake Wright Patman between Bowie and Cass Counties with one long bridge,” said Paul Wong, area engineer for TxDOT in Texarkana. “The current structures are 26 feet wide and the new one will be 44 feet wide with two 12-foot traffic lanes and 10-foot shoulders on each side.”

The new bridges will be constructed to the west of the current highway, so traffic will continue to use the current facilities while the work is being conducted.

Longview Bridge and Road was awarded the contract for the project with a bid of $37.7 million.

“Work on the project should begin in July and take about seven years to complete,” Wong said.
The TxDOT team and a new, yet simple tool made a dramatic difference in showing how TxDOT listens to the public.

Under the direction of Lacey Rodgers, director of transportation planning and development, Stephen Endres and the expert project team, TxDOT gained valuable feedback for the Dallas District’s U.S. 380 feasibility study by using an online and paper survey. Six meetings later, TxDOT has garnered more than 15,000 comments — an unprecedented number in the Dallas District, and possibly within the state, for a single project feasibility study.

TxDOT’s project team knew it had to tackle a 33-mile feasibility study with a different strategy to capture public input. In addition to an online survey using SurveyMonkey, the team also held two meetings with potentially affected property owners; held multiple rounds of meetings with municipal and county staff, homeowners associations and neighborhood leaders; and regularly engaged with potentially affected residential property owners, businesses and nonprofit organizations.

“We are encouraged by the interaction from this community,” said Ceason Clemens, deputy district engineer for the Dallas District. “We’ll base our decision on an alignment that has the least amount of impacts.”

The feasibility study recommends a preferred alignment along a new route, addressing future travel demands and concerns about the new highway near large residential developments. The study team also took a new approach on potential impacts to future development. The team partnered with Collin County and eight cities within the study area to identify land that has been purchased and right of way that is preserved for existing or future planned residential or commercial development.

Public input is one of many factors staff considers when making infrastructure decisions and TxDOT will continue to engage the public to make the best possible transportation plans for communities.
Besides building roads and bridges, managing a railroad, supporting general aviation airports and some public transportation providers, TxDOT is also in the maritime business. With a nod to Texas ports and waterways as the gateways for domestic and international freight, TxDOT created the Maritime Division in 2012 to help the department incorporate marine infrastructure and operations into its transportation system planning. In this role, the division acts on the state’s behalf in working with the Corps of Engineers to acquire land, easements and rights-of-way for the disposal of dredged material in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Dredging — and the land needed to dispose of it — is needed to allow the waterway to handle current and future traffic.

The GIWW — the nation’s third busiest waterway — stretches 1,100 miles along the Gulf of Mexico from St. Marks, Florida to Brownsville. While only 379 miles of the waterway follows the Texas coastline, it handles 72% of the channel’s vessel traffic.

That is big business for the state. According to a 2016 Corps report, 54,000 barges, carrying more than 80 million tons of cargo, moved on the Texas portion of the GIWW. Additionally, in 2014, commercial fishermen caught about 10.3 million pounds of shrimp, oysters, crabs and finfish in the waterway, with a wholesale value of $30.4 million.

Waterborne traffic on the waterway also relieves demand on the state's rails and congestion on Texas roads. One dry cargo barge can carry enough products to fill 16 railcars or 70 trucks. Water travel is also fuel efficient. Based on a report by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, a gallon of fuel moves one ton of waterborne cargo 647 miles, compared to 477 miles on rail and 145 miles by truck.

With the use of Texas waterways expected to increase in the future because of the state’s population growth, the expansion of the energy sector and more trade demand worldwide, the GIWW will continue to play an important transportation role for the state and the nation for years to come.
ROAD TO ZERO

NO DEATHS ARE ACCEPTABLE

How many deaths are acceptable each year on Texas roads? That’s a question TxDOT is addressing through a new ambitious goal, which ultimately states that the answer to the question is zero.
Every day for nearly 19 years at least one person has died on Texas roadways. Now TxDOT aims to reach a goal to end all fatalities on Texas roads by 2050. The Texas Transportation Commission approved the goal in May. The commission also set a goal of cutting fatal crashes in half by 2035, which would reduce annual fatalities to about 1,800.

“While we are committed to invest in the best engineering practices to make our roads safe, we also need drivers and passengers to act more responsibly and help us end the streak of daily deaths on our roads to reach our goal of zero deaths,” said Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan.

Ten people are killed every day on average on roads in Texas. Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits: wearing seat belts, driving the speed limit, not texting or being distracted and never driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Matthew Scordelis’ 17-year-old daughter Alexia was killed in a crash in Williamson County on February 21. His words illustrate that every loss forever changes families.

“Every day I drive by the spot where my daughter died in a crash just a few blocks from home. Our family, her friends, the neighborhood and her school have all deeply felt her loss. We owe it to her and the countless other families in grief to stop these needless deaths,” Scordelis said.

TxDOT already focuses on safety with engineering, education and enforcement efforts. However, this goal builds on an increased emphasis on safety in project prioritization, selection and design as well as continuing driver safety awareness programs, like Talk Text Crash and Click It or Ticket, and working to implement the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

“When it comes to safety, it is important for us to establish a clear vision of where we want to be,” Commissioner Ryan said. “For TxDOT, that vision should be a transportation system that is free from fatal crashes.”

November 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on Texas roadways. Since then, at least one person has died on Texas roadways every single day. #EndTheStreakTX encourages Texans to drive safely to help end the streak of daily deaths on our roadways.

You can #EndTheStreakTX
- Wear seat belts
- Drive the speed limit
- Don’t text and drive
- Don’t drink and drive
Following an in-depth, multi-year review and procurement process involving teams across the department, TxDOT has awarded two five- to seven-year contracts that will take the agency’s outsourced IT services to the next level. Under the new contracts beginning in September, HCL America and NTT DATA will both provide IT services. These outsourced services do not require TxDOT to replace existing employees, but will ensure the department has more expertise to support TxDOT teams.

NTT DATA will provide services related to IT infrastructure and engineering tools, in addition to business and traffic network capabilities (in partnership with Skyline Technology Solutions). Services covered by NTT DATA include customer relations, help desk, application management and support, and dedicated onsite support. Engineering services handled by NTT DATA will also support software tools to perform engineering tasks. 

HCL America will deliver services related to information security, internal and external websites and enterprise architecture. Enterprise architecture includes the development of enterprise standards, technology roadmaps, research plans and technical innovation. This support will help TxDOT make the right investments in technology to maximize value to the state.

This is not a renewal of the existing contract. TxDOT outsourced its IT services for the first time in 2013, selecting NTT DATA to help stabilize, standardize and solve challenges in our IT environment. The success of this initial effort has culminated in the new contract, which is designed to take TxDOT to the next level in IT excellence.
Prior to the procurement process for the new outsourcing contracts, TxDOT performed an in-depth analysis of current and future IT needs. In June 2018, the department released the new request for proposal for outsourced IT services with an expanded and broader scope, inviting leading global technology providers and innovators to compete for the agency’s business across several different service components. Approximately 85 different vendors submitted bids on one or more of the contract areas by the solicitation deadline.

Skilled subject matter experts from across the agency served as independent evaluators of the bids submitted. The vendors were selected by TxDOT’s evaluation team based on their experience, skills and innovative ideas in both written and oral evaluations. The goal was to secure the best, most qualified vendors to take information technology at TxDOT to the next level.

“This is an important time for our agency as we build upon providing customers with the tools required to perform their jobs with ease and efficiency,” said Dana Glover, director of the Information Management Division.

Some of the highlights of the new contract include a state-of-the-art Security Operations Center located in Frisco, which will provide a global resource for TxDOT to monitor security threats to our IT environment. A new customer support model will feature an integrated help desk with more self-service options, as well as an onsite support model to deliver more direct help to the districts. Engineering services will evaluate and incorporate cutting-edge technologies that result in greater safety and efficiencies. A new traffic network service provider is working on an initiative to give TxDOT better visibility into our traffic environment and eventually allow us to repair traffic assets remotely.

A key goal of the new contract is to enhance employee productivity, secure our IT environment and ensure the highest levels of customer service and satisfaction. As an initial deliverable, the new vendors have submitted a transition plan to ensure minimal disruption and maximum benefits. More about these benefits will be shared through iDriveIT and Crossroads as enhancements are planned and rolled out.

Thanks to all TxDOT employees who participated in this process, including members of the evaluation and negotiations teams and representatives of various districts and divisions. This effort involved many dedicated and hardworking teams in the Information Management, Procurement, Contract Services, Strategic Planning and General Counsel divisions.
Connect the Dots provides career training.
Are you wanting to elevate your career? Do you want to make a career move? If so, Connect the Dots can help you get there.

The concept for Connect the Dots began in 2016, when a group of Pharr District employees in the Instructor Certification Program — a set of courses to become TxDOT Certified Trainers — developed the idea to design a training for career planning. Valerie Ramirez, Elizabeth Paradise, Teresa Muehlberger-McMillian and the late Charlie Garza worked with trainer Barbara Raines-Evard on the project.

As a team, they spent countless hours researching, editing and developing an inclusive and inspiring tool to help TxDOT employees take the reins of their careers. It was designed for everyone, no matter their current position, to help them “Connect the Dots” of their individual career story.

The Career Development Program Administrators partnered with Pharr to take Connect the Dots statewide in 2018. The training was launched as a pilot at the Riverside campus in Austin, as well as in Brownwood, Fort Worth, El Paso and San Antonio. More than 60 employees participated in the pilot, and their feedback continues to shape the class.

Here is what TxDOT employees are saying about Connect the Dots:

- “This is one of the best courses I have had at TxDOT.”
- “Taking your course has given me a whole new perspective on my career.”
- “I would highly recommend taking this class to my co-workers.”

Connect the Dots has been requested throughout the state and will soon be available in a district near you. The districts hosting this training in fiscal year 2020 are: Atlanta, Austin, Fort Worth, San Angelo, Lufkin, Dallas, Paris, Odessa, Tyler, Abilene, Wichita Falls and Amarillo. If you want to attend Connect the Dots, you can enroll online in ELM, TxDOT’s Enterprise Learning Management System.

If you have any questions or need assistance with ELM, please email Training@txdot.gov or call the training hotline at 512-416-2000.

For more information on Connect the Dots (DEV130), contact the Career Development team at Development@txdot.gov or 512-416-2700.

For information on the Instructor Certification Program, contact Program Administrator Barbara Raines-Evard at Barbara.Raines-Evard@txdot.gov.
It’s been almost five years since the Communications Division launched TN Network and significantly changed the way TxDOT communicates with its employees. The innovative internal television network began with a pilot project in October 2014 at maintenance offices in the Beaumont and San Angelo districts as well as select locations in the Austin headquarters area.

“The San Angelo District was excited to be a pilot location for the TN Network back in 2014. We have always struggled with how to share information with our maintenance employees who don’t access email frequently,” said Karen Threlkeld, public information officer for the San Angelo District. “With the addition of TV monitors in all the sections, area offices and district office, we thought this would be an opportunity to share information and recognize achievements.”

Specially equipped TV monitors broadcast the TN Network, which includes a mix of video and still graphics and photos with the latest news and information from administration, districts and divisions. The monitors also display a national news ticker and real-time weather information, including a live Doppler weather radar.

“The TN Network has become a valuable and trusted communications vehicle, providing relevant content to TxDOT colleagues, especially those who are in remote parts of the state,” said Bob Kaufman, director of Communications and Customer Service. “Sharing meaningful content enables many to stay connected to the most important developments of the department and advised on milestones our colleagues are celebrating throughout the department.”
At first, employees in the San Angelo District were unsure of what to think of the network, but acceptance has grown tremendously.

“Now, employees look to the TN Network to get information about upcoming events, employee recognition, district trivia and safety campaigns. They like seeing themselves or their co-workers on the TV. The TN Network has become another tool in the communication tool box,” Threlkeld said.

By 2017 all 25 districts and select divisions had the TN Network in their buildings.

Octavio Saenz, public information officer for the Pharr District, says he puts himself in the shoes of the maintenance crews that may not have time to get on a computer to find out about opportunities.

“I use it as a billboard for job opportunities, training and award winners,” he said. “I record recognized local celebrities expressing their thanks and appreciation to our crews for keeping roads in tip top shape. I think it helps boost morale.”

In the Dallas District, the TN Network has been used to broadcast everything from job postings to ice cream socials. Ryan LaFontaine, former public information officer and content coordinator for the Dallas District, says he posted maintenance crews working in the field and listed the names of each employee and what area office they were from.

“It’s important that employees feel that they are part of a bigger family and TN Network provides that. It allows us to include every single employee, no matter their role,” he said.

Recently LaFontaine wanted to increase employee interest in the network. In April, district employees were asked to submit photos of themselves and their pets for National Pet Day.

“I had no idea how remarkable the buy-in would be. We were overwhelmed with emails of TxDOT employees and their family pets. Every type of pet you could possibly imagine: dogs, cats, horses, pigs,” he said. “We had so many photos of employees and their pets that we had to run National Pet Day photos for a few weeks to include everyone.”

But the strategy worked. When National Pet Day arrived, he received dozens of emails and calls from employees asking where they could view the TN Network. Thanks to a few dogs and pigs, a much larger percentage of district employees knew where to find the network.

“I don’t think you can put a value on this type of instant and direct employee engagement,” LaFontaine said.

For information about the TN Network or to make programming suggestions, email TNnetwork@txdot.gov.
For the first time since it began, TxDOT took home the top prize in the Get Fit Texas! Challenge in 2019. With a record-breaking 5,581 employees registered in this year’s competition, TxDOT defeated the Texas Department of Public Safety, the reigning champ in this agency-to-agency competition.

The Get Fit Texas! Challenge is an annual 10-week challenge hosted by the Department of State Health Services. Since 2013, DSHS has challenged employees of state agencies to be physically active for 150 minutes a week for at least six weeks out of the ten-week challenge.

TxDOT has finished second in this competition for the last three years. This year, TxDOT was ready to take the title. With over 14 million minutes logged and 39% of our full-time employees meeting the minimum goal, TxDOT surpassed nine other large state agencies and received first place.

TxDOT’s Wellness Program Administrators, Arlin Alvarez and Gina Akin, accepted this award on behalf of TxDOT at the April 18 statewide awards ceremony.

In addition, TxDOT had a friendly internal competition among districts and divisions as extra motivation to be active in the Get Fit Texas! Challenge. Employees from across all districts and divisions choose to lace up their shoes to get the highest percentage of completion within their category. Competition was close in several categories.

The winners of this internal competition were announced at the Senior Leadership Meeting on April 9. The Childress, Yoakum and Corpus Christi districts won in the small, medium and large district categories, respectively. Among the divisions, Maritime was the small division winner, while Public Transportation and Traffic Safety took the medium and large division categories.

Congratulations to all employees who made physical activity a weekly focus and hopefully gained a healthy habit. Don’t stop now, TxDOT — keep moving!
Employees and members of the public submitted more than 300 suggestions over the past year to the Innovation and Cost Efficiency program. They recommended stewardship opportunities across the agency highlighting ways in which TxDOT could get better, faster and safer.

“As part of this initiative, we intend to have a more central view and management of innovation and cost savings,” said Director of Strategy and Innovation Darran Anderson.

Along with major initiatives with future efficiencies like TxDOTCONNECT — which is modernizing statewide construction project management lifecycles — other future ideas include:

• The implementation of a utility conflict management process by the Right of Way Division in partnership with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. This effort will reduce the time and costs associated with a project by mitigating potential utility conflicts and determining any necessary resolution.
• The decision by the Project Finance, Debt and Strategic Contracts Division to terminate fee-based, short-term borrowing programs. To date, this decision has resulted in savings of $2.26 million with continued savings projected until 2021.

Smaller-scale efforts like the Think About Ink campaign also contribute to innovation and cost efficiency. Launched in October 2018 by the Information Management Division, the initiative aims to reduce waste associated with printing costs while building a culture of stewardship and responsibility.

Additionally, the Information Management Division decreased the number of unused mobile devices. To date, 109 cell phones and 500 iPads have been removed from the TxDOT environment.

Other cost-savings and efficiency submissions are under consideration for future implementation. The goal is to realize $613 million in savings and efficiencies with continued input from TxDOT staff so please submit your ideas today!

TxDOT values employee input for improving the agency. Your participation is encouraged and could be rewarded with a spotlight in TN Magazine, a TN Minute video recognizing you and your suggestion, performance leave, one-time merit pay and recognition at Short Course or other TxDOT conferences, among other incentives.

For more information and to submit ideas, check out the Innovation and Cost Efficiency Program Strategic Planning Division Crossroads page.
TxDOT WORKSITES GET TEXAS MOTHER-FRIENDLY DESIGNATION

TxDOT worksites in 13 districts and at headquarters campuses in Austin have joined hundreds of other Texas businesses to be designated as Texas Mother-Friendly Worksites by the Department of State Health Services. Employers that provide mother-friendly worksites benefit from increased employee retention, lower absenteeism, higher morale, greater productivity and reduced health care costs.

DSHS created the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Program to encourage businesses to support breastfeeding working mothers. Breastfeeding has short-term and long-term health benefits for both mother and child and is recommended by all major medical organizations if it is possible and desired by the individual. According to DSHS, more than 75% of new Texas mothers breastfeed their babies.

At TxDOT, employees and their families play an important role in the agency’s values and overall success. Since research shows that supporting breastfeeding employees benefits individuals and businesses, the agency’s Wellness Program has established the Lactation Support Program to make worksites more parent-friendly.

To achieve the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite designation, a worksite must have a written lactation support policy that includes providing a private space other than a bathroom for milk expression, access to a nearby safe water source and hygienic storage options to safely store breastmilk. The policy must also allow for flexible work scheduling so employees can take time to express milk.

“Just a few simple changes made such a difference for me,” said Bethany Wyatt, business relationship manager with the Information Management Division. “I can now focus on work and also focus on being a mom. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate these improvements.”

TxDOT updated its nursing parent policy in October 2018 to help make the transition back to work easier for employees who choose to continue to breastfeed. With this updated policy and the establishment of nursing-parent rooms, worksites across TxDOT are getting the DSHS mother-friendly designation. Austin, Beaumont, Bryan, Childress, Corpus Christi, Houston, Laredo, Odessa, Paris, San Angelo, San Antonio, Tyler and Wichita Falls district offices are certified along with the Greer, Riverside, Camp Hubbard and Cedar Park campuses at Austin headquarters. Other districts are in the process of applying for the designation.

“To the purpose of our policy and establishing nursing parent rooms is to create a supportive environment for parents returning to work,” said Human Resources Division Director David McMillan. “The districts and divisions earning this certification are exemplifying what inclusion means to our employees.”
The Infants at Work pilot is a voluntary program that allows employees who return to work after becoming parents to bring their infant, which supports a positive work-life balance.

TxDOT's Human Resources Division's Employee Diversity and Inclusion section recently launched an Infants at Work Program pilot.

The program pilot is a year-long endeavor established for eligible employees who are new mothers, fathers or legal guardians of an infant. Research proves that allowing a parent and infant to remain together in this earliest stage of life supports critical bonding, healthy infant brain development and parental wellbeing. It also accommodates nursing parents, which improves lifelong health.

“TxDOT's Infants at Work Program is eligible for infants age six weeks to six months, or until they are mobile or crawling,” said Jennifer Williams, director of the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Section. “While this program is not suitable for all employees, it can be a flexible workplace solution for those who are eligible and want to participate. We are also aware that some work environments are not conducive for infants or children regardless of the age.”

The Infants at Work Program pilot is a voluntary program that allows employees who return to work after becoming parents to bring their infant, which supports a positive work-life balance, while honoring their contributions to the department.

“By implementing this limited-focused program pilot, the agency will be able to assess the program's viability while helping parents bond with their children and save on increasing child care costs,” said Williams.

Such programs have been implemented at agencies in other states, including departments of transportation. DOTs in Arizona, Kansas, Nevada, North Dakota, Washington state and Vermont all allow eligible state employees to bring their infants to work. Washington and Arizona both implemented their programs more than a decade ago.

“Infants at Work programs are widely viewed as another option to attract and retain working parents and guardians, both male and female,” said Williams.

Participation in the pilot program requires approval from the employee’s immediate supervisor. Other requirements include: completion of pre-program eligibility documents, expectation-setting conversations with not only the immediate supervisor, but the district engineer or division director and the Infants at Work Program administrator. Participation also requires an inspection of the employee’s work space for safety protocols.

Productivity standards, employee workloads and disruption minimizations, related to things such as crying and diaper changes, can also be effectively managed with participating employees.

Contact Jennifer Williams at 512-486-5306 or email HRD_EmployeeDiversity@txdot.gov for more information about the program.

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The Infants at Work pilot is a voluntary program that allows employees who return to work after becoming parents to bring their infant, which supports a positive work-life balance.
Thanks to the generosity of TxDOT employees, nearly $5 million has been donated to deserving causes through the State Employee Charitable Campaign. Between 2003 and 2017, TxDOT employees gave $4.8 million through the SECC, which recently honored the department for the significant amount of donations.

“This award is recognition of the compassionate heart of the TxDOT family,” said Executive Director James Bass. “The nearly $5 million raised by TxDOT employees through the SECC has helped numerous individuals here in Texas and around the world. I’m so proud of our employees who not only care about meeting the transportation needs of Texans, but also care about meeting the human needs of their neighbors and communities.”

Four out of the past five years, TxDOT has had the highest level of participation among state agencies with more than 5,000 employees. TxDOT also ranked second in average donation amount per employee.

Created by the Texas Legislature in 1993, the SECC provides aid to families, friends, neighbors and countless others in need. In 2018, the SECC celebrated 25 years of assisting charities that improve the quality of life for people in communities locally, across the country and around the world. Last year, 32,371 state employees raised more than $7 million, with an average gift per employee of $219.

Each fall, state employees are given the opportunity to learn about the charities in the SECC, choose which ones they wish to help and then fill out a pledge form to indicate how much they wish to donate to which groups. One of the great benefits of the SECC is the wide variety of charities and causes represented. They range from local and statewide organizations to large and well-known national and international groups. All charities are recognized by the IRS as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and must meet strict eligibility criteria.

Participating organizations include nonprofits such as Meals on Wheels, Refugee Services of Texas, local YMCAs and many others. There are also multiple statewide organizations, such as the United Way, which assists homeless or domestic violence shelters, job training programs targeting veterans and other community programs.

Thanks to all the TxDOT employees who continue to help others through their generosity. TxDOT SECC campaigns run during October and November each year. To learn more about the program, visit www.secctexas.org.
Is this office in TxDOT’s future? Workspace lab lets employees test it out.

TxDOT’s leases on the buildings of its Riverside campus in Austin will not be renewed as they expire in the next few years. This circumstance has led to the decision to combine most of TxDOT’s headquarters in Austin into one campus. The goal is to bring division employees together in a workplace that fosters collaboration and efficiency.

As part of the design effort for the new buildings, the Campus Consolidation Project team is creating a living workspace lab in building 150 of the Riverside Campus in Austin. So, what exactly is a living workspace lab? It’s a test site for the design and development of workspaces that promote job efficiency while focusing on employee overall wellbeing.

The lab will simulate the various workspace combinations being considered for the new campus. These options include open concept offices, individual workspaces, collaborative work areas and shared working spaces. Employees will be able to make changes to the lab workstations such as changing desks from sitting to standing and adding or removing panels. The goal of the lab is to let employees experience the proposed workspaces and provide their feedback on what works best.

Remodeling of the space in the Riverside building has begun and the lab is expected to open this summer. Each TxDOT division and district will have a designated week to test out the proposed workspaces. Feedback from employees will be critical to the success of the testing and there will be multiple ways to submit suggestions. These suggestions will be considered by the project design team and may be incorporated into the final designs.

The workspace designs used at the new campus in Austin will be the new standard for offices across the state. When new district offices are built, or current district offices are remodeled, the workspaces will be developed like those at the new campus. This makes participation by employees across the state a vital element of this stage of the Campus Consolidation Project.

Keep an eye out for more information about the living workspace lab. It will give you the opportunity to have a voice in the look and feel of future offices at TxDOT.

Videos and other information on the project are available on the Services Division’s site on Crossroads.
Christopher West, utility coordinator with the Odessa District, is a native Texan who attended Texas A&M University. He worked in numerous non-transportation fields before joining the Odessa District in February 2018. West has several family members who also worked at TxDOT over the years, including his parents. He enjoys spending time with his two sisters and travels frequently to visit them when they come home from college.

Tell us about your role as a utility coordinator and what kind of projects you work on.

As a utility coordinator, I work on many different types of projects. One of my first responsibilities when I joined TxDOT was to process and evaluate utility installation requests. These requests come from various sources, including public utilities and large oil and gas companies. I am told the Odessa District is responsible for about 40% of the high pressure gas line crossing requests across the state right now. I also work on our district’s saltwater leasing program which is consistently one of the largest in the state due to the massive amount of oil and gas exploration in the Permian Basin.

Share an instance where your work made a significant impact on the traveling public.

Many of my daily duties as a utility coordinator have an impact on the public but are rarely visible. One of the most significant things I do involves coordinating with water transfer companies to develop routes for saltwater leases. These leasing opportunities allow us to open up excess space along our roads to transfer water to and from oil and gas exploration sites. In doing this, we can drastically reduce the number of large trucks on our roads, which allows for safer passage of the traveling public and less wear and tear on our existing roads.

What do you like most about working in the Odessa District?

I like seeing the growth we have in the district. I’m in a unique position to see where the growth is because I have a window into the utility industry. I can see things coming and work with our engineers to ensure that we plan ahead.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of your job and how do you handle them?

This position allows me to work with various types of utility companies and coordinate with other districts and divisions. All these entities work differently so ensuring clear communication to meet deadlines can be challenging.
Christopher West
Utility Coordinator
Odessa District
**Cindy Jeanes**  
*Material/Process Inspector, Tyler District*

Cindy Jeanes, material/process inspector for the Tyler District, came to work for TxDOT in 1993. She currently works in the Tyler District Lab, but worked in the Jacksonville and Tyler Area Offices for many years. When not at work, she enjoys traveling, dancing and always learning new things. She also loves horror movies, Halloween and spiders.

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**What’s the best part of being a material/process inspector for TxDOT?**

The best part is the challenge of putting my knowledge to use in helping others. Through the years I have learned so much, it would be a shame not to share that knowledge. There is never a dull moment at the Tyler District Lab! I love my job!

**What five words best describe you and why?**

Inquisitive, motivated, direct, sensible and funny. Life is too short not to enjoy it. I pride myself on learning new things and having common sense. I like to make people laugh.

**What motivates you to work hard?**

I take pride in my work, so I work hard.

**Would you rather vacation in Hawaii or Alaska, and why?**

I’ve been to Hawaii. It is so beautiful. I would go again every chance I could. I especially love the feral chickens on Kaua’i.

**What kitchen appliance do you use every day?**

My coffee pot!

**Whataburger or In-N-Out Burger?**

Not a fan of either. I’ll take some shrimp instead.

**What three things do you think of the most each day?**

Being happy, enjoying my life and loved ones, and being thankful for living in this beautiful world!

**What is one thing you will never do again?**

Go tubing behind a boat. I’m glad I came out of that one alive. That’s all I’m gonna say about it.

**Are you usually early or late?**

Depends on what day it is and whether or not I had to stop and rescue a turtle.

**What takes up too much of your time?**

Traveling to and from work! I live an hour away but I take that time to think. So it’s time well spent. It also hones my driving skills. I’m thinking about race car driving when I retire.
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 August 7.

Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier Pierce Robson (BRY). Last edition’s photo featured the statue of Dash for Cash, a champion Quarter Horse who raced in the 1970s, at the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame and Museum in Amarillo.

Others correctly identifying the photo were Felice Herrera-Kish (HRD), Chris Cowen (BRY), Kellie Mannering (BRY), Arilyn Carter (FTW), Maurice Maness (BRY), Eric Agnew (FTW), Ann Wenske (YKM), Tammie Duhan (BMT), Karen Ashley (YKM), Hector Siller (PHR), Buddy Hudson (MNT), Kim Deal (LFK), Joseph Hagler (LFK), Jan Nolte (WFS), Richard Sliva (retired), Jeffrey Martin (FTW), Mike Knowles (retired), Colton Kabetzke (AMA), Austin Valentine (GOV), Timothy Lowak (SAT), Barbara Mills (LFK), Tiffany Creuzbaur (STR), Sendy Bolin (AMA) and Mike Cook (AMA).

UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

**July 4**
Independence Day
All agencies closed

**July 5**
Day after Independence Day
Minimal staff required

**July 25**
Texas Transportation Commission Meeting

**August 27**
LBJ’s Birthday
Minimal staff required

**August 29**
Texas Transportation Commission Meeting
MILESTONES

2019

28 MAY SERVICE AWARDS

DISTRICTS

ABILENE
25 Richard M. Garza
Danny C. Medford
20 Julie Rogers
15 Jacki Ray
5 Michael A. Erb
Justin L. Garrett
Kenneth E. Jones
Thomas Lee

AMARILLO
45 Lonnie Parr
35 Brian P. Crawford
30 David R. Regier

ATLANTA
15 Scotty L. Jackson
10 David J. Judice
5 Terrance D. Cannon

AUSTIN
35 Willie Brundige
25 Michelle L. Cooper
20 Larry W. Clements
Terresa A. Resendez
Diana K. Schulze
15 Juan Salazar
5 Samuel T. Himawan

BEAUMONT
5 Chad W. Roach

BROWNWOOD
25 Jeffrey S. Primrose

BRYAN
30 Mark E. Jeffrey

CHILDRESS
15 Brian K. Miller
5 Eloy V. Camacho

CORPUS CHRISTI
15 Jason T. McKelvey
Carol G. Rivas
5 Randall H. Miles
Donald S. Norton

DALLAS
40 Melvin D. Harris
35 Gary N. Blackman
25 Robert E. Boykin
Ali R. Taheri
Damon T. White
Congli Ye
20 Larry S. Hoppe
15 Dawit Abraham
10 Michael J. Self
5 Richard D. Dowdy
Habtamu K. Gebreselassie

EL PASO
25 Rodolfo M. Romo
5 Israel G. Borrego
Alan Gonzalez
Rafael Gonzalez
Edgar O. Marin
Linda H. Menas
Juan C. Morales

FORT WORTH
25 Ram R. Gupta
20 Mark B. Burwell
Gregory W. Cedillo
10 Martin K. Howell
5 Larry D. Bickerstaff Jr.
Roshan K. Shrestha

HOUSTON
30 Anthony C. Novosad
25 Phillip H. Sasser
Joseph I. Tijerina
15 William S. Bailey
Robert L. Etheredge
David O. Jamandre
Tan N. Luong
Peggy M. Personett
Andres D. Varilla
Sarah M. Wyckoff
10 Patricia G. Marsh
5 Jesus Cervantes
Clifford E. Davis
Terry M. Ryan
Martin Salinas

LAREDO
30 Eduardo R. Deleon
25 Carolyn B. Murdoch
5 Daniel Garcia

LUBBOCK
20 John T. Ryan
15 Joe D. Gomez
Ruben Renteria

LUFKIN
25 Eleazar E. Carranza
20 Darrell D. Nealy
15 Joe B. Blyle
Steven C. Hampton
5 William L. Conway
Benjamin L. Graham

PARIS
30 Michael C. Clark
25 Julie D. Rook
15 Barry H. Nance
5 Kenneth L. House

PHARR
25 Yvonne J. Hernandez
Benita Mendoza
Elizabeth L. Paradise
Gerardo Perez

SAN ANGELO
25 Jose L. Escaname
5 Raquel Cantu
Daniel Flores
Nayely Parra

SAN ANTONIO
45 Bobby J. Pantermuehl
30 David N. McRae
Basilio M.Quiroga Jr.
20 Gil Romo Jr.
5 Pedro M. Carrillo
Mario Lopez III
Roy Medrano
Monica A. Ruiz

TULSA
25 Christopher J. Castleberry
Charles N. Kirby
15 Brian E. Rivers

WICHITA FALLS
20 Michael J. Bolin

YOAKUM
20 Freddie Ramirez

DIVISIONS

ADMINISTRATION
5 Richard C. McMonagle

AVIATION
5 Edward C. Ricke

BRIDGE
5 Gerardo Moreno

CIVIL RIGHTS
15 Hermelinda Longoria
10 Sonny C. Nugent

COMMUNICATIONS
20 Bobby B. Colwell
5 Timothy W. McAlavy

CONSTRUCTION
25 Crystal A. Woodruff

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
25 Christina L. Cabello
20 Lillie C. Salas
5 Morgan E. Davis
Elizabeth C. Millichamp

FLEET OPERATIONS
25 Thomas D. Moore
Stephen P. Taylor
20 Omar Saenz
15 Chris L. McCandless
5 Shane Dornak
Runi A. Rodriguez
Timothy R. Speer
Richard L. Tucker

HUMAN RESOURCES
5 Sajimom Luckose

MAINTENANCE
20 Salomon Flores
Magdy Y. Mikhail
Khoa H. Nguyen
5 Debra A. Jeffers

MATERIALS & TESTS
25 Carmen S. Iglehart
15 Daniel Balboa
5 Rodrigo Vivar

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
5 Tina C. Dukes

PEPS
5 David J. McLachien
Vanessa J. Williams

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
30 Sonya D. Hudson

RAIL
20 Mark R. Werner

RIGHT OF WAY
45 Nancy E. Johnson
15 Christina M. Lambert
Hettie M. Thompson
5 Patti J. Dathe
Robert R. Mosley

SUPPORT SERVICES
15 Arthur Garcia
5 Ciro F. Lucero

TOLL OPERATIONS
10 Jimmy Bailey
5 Karol J. Tillman

TRAFFIC SAFETY
25 Karen D. Peoples
15 Douglas Skowronek

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & PROGRAMMING
5 Eric T. Clennon
Nicolas J. Page

28 TN July - August 2019
JUNE SERVICE AWARDS

DISTRICTS

ABILENE
25 Stewart J. Chapman
15 Joe M. Cox
  Daniel De Hoyos
  Ernest L. Piske Jr.

AMARILLO
30 Bradley D. Buchanan
25 Robert G. Hendricks
20 Gregory B. Timmons
15 Marion E. Sims
  Russell D. Washer
  Justin L. Jordan

AUSTIN
25 David M. Goldstein
  Mark E. Hoefelmeyer
20 Walter G. Barfield
  James R. Chamberlin
  John A. Robinson

BEAUMONT
30 Andrea M. Murry
  William D. McGallion

BROWNWOOD
10 Bryan M. Kenyon

BRYAN
20 Doug J. Marino
  Hoyt M. Wichman
15 Anthony L. Garcia
  Mark S. Tidwell
  Carlton E. Williams

CHILDRESS
30 Jerry D. Reynolds
25 Kevin M. Taylor
15 Anthony L. Garcia
  Mark S. Tidwell
  Carlton E. Williams

CORPUS CHRISTI
30 Arthur R. Chacon
25 Orlando J. Carrillo
  Veniamina K. Mouhtaraova

DALLAS
30 Bryan E. Ogden
25 Maher M. Ghanyem
  Jesse Jacquez
20 Michael O. Anthony
  James D. Morren
15 Mary P. Morrel
  Christopher P. Rocha
  Robert M. Neathery
  Patrick J. Rivera
  Miftah S. Semane

EL PASO
5 Jorge J. Laboy

FORT WORTH
50 Raymond T. Buzalsky
  5 Clinton E. Popham
  5 Stephanie A. Prince
  5 Mohammed A. Quadeer

HOUSTON
40 Russell L. Johns
  35 James B. Schlichting
  30 Daniel E. Ammons
  25 David S. Crain
  25 Paula W. Moore
  15 Vera Dee Rader
  20 Tammy T. Samuel
  20 Mary M. Hernandez
  15 Sedrick D. Scott
  5 Felicia M. Shamlin
  15 Kurtis K. Tielke
  5 Timothy Chern
  5 James R. Mergist
  5 Jeremy W. Pavlock
  5 Ariane M. Williams

LAREDO
20 Roberto Rodriguez III
  20 Oscar H. Almaraz
  5 Vladimir Martinez
  5 Antonio Reyna Jr.

LUBBOCK
20 Edwin D. Hartfield
  15 Ricky D. Alexander
  15 Robert G. Hansen
  5 Martin Aguilar

LUFKIN
25 Michael R. Moore
  20 Jesse D. Sisco
  20 Nolan B. Arnold
  15 Teresa G. Beller
  15 Rodney D. Jolley
  5 Casey R. Minshew
  5 Michael J. Pyle

ODESSA
30 Ruben R. Salcido Jr.

PARIS
20 Matthew A. Poirrot

PHARR
15 Manuel Estrada III
  15 Margil Maldonado Jr.
  15 Jesus A. Noriega

SAN ANGELO
35 Curtis J. Whitlock
  15 Corey D. Nelson
  15 Kiley N. Seaton
  15 Lea M. Jacobson
  15 Armando F. Rodriguez
  15 Lance G. Williams
  15 Curtis L. Wooten
  5 Gustavo L. Jimenez

SAN ANTONIO
25 Kiley N. Seaton
  20 Lea M. Jacobson
  15 Armando F. Rodriguez
  15 Lance G. Williams
  15 Curtis L. Wooten
  5 Gustavo L. Jimenez

YAOUK
30 George A. Eilert
  20 Brian K. Jasek
  15 Lester G. Clark Jr.
  5 Richard D. Guerrero Jr.

YOAKUM
20 Martin Aguilar
  15 Antonio Reyna Jr.

DIVISIONS

ADMINISTRATION
5 Darran T. Anderson

CIVIL RIGHTS
15 Christina Calvo

CONSTRUCTION
25 Mason A. Adam
  20 Samuel Lopez III

DESIGN
20 Sandra Sinton

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
20 Heather Burgess
  5 Mary Dubey
  5 Shana B. Wise

FLEET OPERATIONS
30 Lauren C. Fortier
  20 Joseph S. Lamb
  15 Omar T. Jimenez
  15 Rodney W. Rodrigues
  5 Toni M. Green
  5 William A. Kirchgessner
  5 Mark A. McWhorter

HUMAN RESOURCES
20 Diana Y. Arredondo
  15 Juan P. Pinales
  10 Joseph M. Seifert
  5 Armando F. Rodriguez
  5 Lance G. Williams

MAINTENANCE
25 Suzanne R. Gyngard

MATERIALS & TESTS
30 Robert J. Roe
  25 Marissa E. Trujillo
  20 Jason Tucker

PEPS
25 Noemi Rios
  5 Priscilla S. Canales
  5 Ana M. Rivera

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
25 Donna F. Roberts
  10 Gonzalo Ponce

RAIL
25 Christine E. Cano

RIGHT OF WAY
30 Michael D. Lightfoot
  15 Loretta G. Velasco

SUPPORT SERVICES
25 Eliska M. Carrier-Robinson
  15 Michael T. Schintgen
  10 Jane A. Reding

TRAVEL INFORMATION
15 Cynthia R. Newsom
  5 Brandon T. Jakobeit

TN July - August 2019 29
MARCH RETIREE REPORT

DISTRICTS
AMARILLO
25 Jimmy L. Traylor
19 Max A. Crow
ATLANTA
15 Jennie D. Petty
AUSTIN
31 Doyle D. Moeller
22 Maria Del Carmen Ramos
16 Randy Kalka
BRYAN
26 Maurice W. Jacob
23 Joseph S. Tomek
13 Larry D. Mitchell
CORPUS CHRISTI
36 Mark A. Janysek
FORT WORTH
29 Billy J. Manning
25 Glynis P. Rodriguez
16 James N. Pool Jr.
PARIS
26 Tom G. Roest
PHARR
25 Joel Garcia
24 Bill C. Taitague
10 Esteban Martinez
SAN ANGELO
4 Mary Beth Cantu
SAN ANTONIO
19 Francine B. Elkins
WACO
26 David D. Deleon
WICHITA FALLS
25 Jose M. Villastrigo
YOAKUM
15 Elliott Greg Huddleston Sr.

IN MEMORIAM
DISTRICTS
ABILENE
Alan S. Thomas
Construction Inspector
Date of Death: 5/25/2019
Years of Service: 26
AUSTIN
James P. Williams
General Transportation Technician
Date of Death: 3/24/2019
Years of Service: 7
SAN ANTONIO
Kyle Richey
General Transportation Technician
Date of Death: 5/10/2019
Years of Service: 4
WACO
Terry R. Holt
Date of Death: 03/05/2019
Retired: 2000
Years of Service: 35

APRIL RETIREE REPORT

DISTRICTS
ABILENE
19 Jesse A. Gonzales
ATLANTA
21 Carl E. Coats
AUSTIN
32 Kevin W. Dickey
21 Anthony W. Paidle
BEAUMONT
26 Donald L. Dozier
19 Ramoncito A. Belan
DALLAS
29 Byron K. Bishop
22 Marx C. Madison
FORT WORTH
10 Martin K. Howell
LAREDO
24 Melisa D. Montemayor
PHARR
27 Leticia Vela
10 Armando Garcia
SAN ANTONIO
21 David B. Taylor
WACO
23 Brent T. Zarosky
DIVISIONS
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
29 Herlinda A. Hickman
16 Patrick A. Schneider
MATERIALS & TESTS
26 Claudia F. Kern
PEPS
6 Tooran Khosh
BRIDGE
15 Wade R. Voges
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
11 Linda L. Pendergras
RIGHT OF WAY
20 Diana J. Seerey

HUMAN RESOURCES
16 Lazara L. Hepburn
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
31 Jerry R. Jones
INTERNAL AUDIT
3 Dwight Warren
MATERIALS & TESTS
24 Hisham S. Makkouk
RAIL
17 Gilbert D. Wilson
RIGHT OF WAY
16 Mendi L. Smothermon
Childress Employees Rescue Woman from Rattlesnake

Last March, two Childress District employees came to the rescue of an 85-year-old woman who found herself in grave danger. General Transportation Technicians David Price and Dwane Morton were picking up litter in Hardeman County along SH 6, south of Quanah, when they noticed an elderly woman on the ground in her backyard.

The men approached the woman, Joyce Milligan, and discovered she fell when she noticed a 5-foot rattlesnake, which was still there. Afraid to move, she had been lying in her backyard for several hours with the snake only a few feet away before she was spotted by the observant TxDOT employees.

Price and Morton took care of the snake and then helped Milligan inside her home after making sure she was not injured. They then called Hardeman County Maintenance Supervisor Jamie Talley, who contacted Milligan’s family.

“I want to thank my employees for going out of their way to help someone in a time of need,” said Talley.

Milligan’s daughter, Charlotte Folmar, expressed her appreciation in a letter.

“You cannot know how much I appreciate them being so observant on this day,” she wrote. “As soon as the two workers realized she was in trouble, they went to her. They went above and beyond to help. Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts!”

Send information or any thank-you emails, letters or calls you or your co-workers receive to AskTxDOT so we can continue to shine Bright Lights on TxDOT employee achievements.
Blood donation saves lives

Blood is essential to our survival. Blood contains red blood cells, which carry oxygen to our body’s organs and tissues; white blood cells, which defend against infection; and platelets, which help blood to clot when injuries occur.

Blood donation is an important act of kindness because our community needs adequate blood supply for individuals who need blood transfusions due to blood loss or because of a medical condition that prevents the body from producing new blood cells. Scott Stephenson, attorney for the Contract Services Division, knows firsthand of the importance of blood donations.

Scott’s father was a regular blood donor and he thought that continuing that path was a neat thing to do. His first blood donation was at age 17 and he continued to donate in every city he lived. It wasn’t until 2016 when Scott got to really see how donating blood could save a life—his daughter’s life. This is his story.

In 2016, my daughter became terribly ill with ulcerative colitis, a disease that affects the large intestine. It was really tough on her and the treatment she received was not helping her get any better. She was hospitalized twice in the spring of that year and had to receive multiple blood transfusions each time. Later that fall she had to undergo the first of three operations that would save her life, receiving blood at that time as well. Now, I donate in her honor to give back to those who donated the life-saving gift of blood to my daughter. As a TxDOT employee I have several opportunities each year to donate and it is within walking distance, so it’s convenient and I do it as often as I can.

There is no such thing as synthetic blood. In other words, blood cannot be manufactured, so next time a blood drive is offered in your area, step up and help keep the supply stocked. You never know if you or a loved one may need it in the future!