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INAUGURAL SUMMIT MISSION ZERO

A Safe Work Place Is A Productive Work Place

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The inaugural “Time Out for Safety Summit” sought to dispel the notion that productivity suffers when safety is emphasized on the job site. More than 100 TxDOT safety officers, district engineers, project engineers, agency executives and other safety experts gathered in Corpus Christi to promulgate initiatives for Mission Zero – zero preventable incidents, zero injuries, zero days of lost time and zero fatalities.

“The bottom line is that I’m really confident that everyone will work with a better understanding of how important it is to create and maintain the safest work place possible,” said Jerral Wyer, the agency’s Division Director for Occupational Safety. “The energy in the room resulted in a total collaboration in ensuring that we have processes to fine-tune and implement practices that will help save lives.”

The event was designed to improve safety in work zones and the workplace by establishing long-term safety goals and pro-active best practices statewide

that would move towards achieving Mission Zero. Private industry leaders shared education, training and implementation of safety practices that enhanced productivity. Summit participants brainstormed about how to make safety a top priority in both TxDOT construction and maintenance projects and making individuals accountable for safety in the work place.

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“The highways are our offices, our meeting space,” said David B. Casteel, Assistant Executive Director for Field and District Operations. “Safety is of the utmost importance for our employees, contractors

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Inaugural Summit Mission Zero (Continued)

and to the traveling public. I was impressed by the seriousness and dedication of the District Engineers regarding safety for employees and the traveling public. They realize and are living the importance of safety in every aspect of their jobs and decision-making.”

Mission Zero is attainable with the unflinching support of agency leadership at all levels, a strong commitment to safety in our daily work through collaboration with contractors who share our goals and by effective communication of safety expectations for all who share our work zone.



Safety Summit registration



Safety Summit Best Practices

Survey and Artwork Designed to Improve Ferry Image

A component of the Texas Department of Transportation’s strategy to enhance the customer experience at the Port Aransas ferry is a new survey that analyzes the experiences of local residents, Winter Texans, the local workforce and other island visitors and a statewide art contest to dress up the appearances of the ferries.

Approximately 1,500 surveys were handed out February 17-18 and asked motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists to rate the overall ferry experience, the boarding process, the contracted “traffic directors” and the safety/security staff. A snapshot of some of the 608 surveys returned give positive reviews of the overall ferry operations. Approximately 97 percent of respondents rated the overall ferry experience as Excellent or Good. The most satisfied customers are Winter Texans and tourists while local workforce expressed a desire to reduce wait time and to find a way to prioritize boarding. “All in all, we’re a very efficient operation,” said Amy Loos, the Public Information Officer for the Yoakum District, who spearheaded the survey. “We’re exploring ways to use dynamic messaging, Bluetooth



technology and the Internet to inform motorists of real time wait periods and alternative routes.”

Previous enhancements already accomplished by the Ferry Operations program include free WiFi at both Harbor Island and Port Aransas, and new tropical print shirts for ferry staff on special occasions. In 2010, the Travel Division conducted two days of orientation for ferry staff and contract workers to emphasize the importance of friendly, responsive customer-oriented service.

Amy Loos unveils the artwork on the ferry Mark G. Goode on 3/14/11. In attendance were five of the seven winning artists, the art contest judges and other Port Aransas residents.

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Survey and Artwork Designed (continued)

In March, TxDOT unveiled the first two pieces of art selected to grace the tower of the William G. Burnett ferry. "Texas" by Theresa Coppock features a sunny beach scene with the letters T-E-X-A-S scribbled in the sand. "A Walk on the Beach" by Denise R. Martin-Tidwell captures a family walking hand-in-hand on the beach as pelicans fly by and shorebirds scavenge for food.

The Mark Goode ferry features "Swimming in Sunlight" by Mary Catherine Gardner and "In the Wake" by Nena Murphy-Hale. The J.C. Dingwall ferry will have two pieces by a single artist - "Trout of Color" and "Rainbow Runners" by L. Carol Crozier. A total of 66 entries were received and judged by Transportation Commissioner Bill Meadows, Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ann Vaughan, Port Aransas Mayor Keith McMullin, Nueces County Commissioner Joe McComb and State Representative Todd Hunter of Corpus Christi.

"I was thrilled to participate as a judge in the inaugural Port Aransas Ferry Art Contest," said Commissioner Bill Meadows, who envisioned the art project. "The featured art will enhance ridership for our customers as well as pay tribute to the unique South Texas Coast setting."

Opinion surveys were handed out to ferry customers in February 2011.



The tower of the ferry William G. Burnett with its artwork "Texas" by Theresa Coppock and "A Walk On the Beach" by Denise Martin-Tidwell.

Don't Mess With Texas Trash-Off

April 2, 2011

The "Don't Mess With Texas" Trash-Off has been the single largest one-day clean up event in the state. The success of the event over the last 25 years depends on the participation of the Adopt A Highway and the Keep Texas Beautiful volunteers. On April 2, almost 150 volunteers from 11 organizations throughout the 10-county Corpus Christi District helped beautify the highways. Last year we had more than eight million pounds of trash that more than 74,000 volunteers picked up; there were 840 events and 6,219 miles of highway were cleared. With the increase in population in Texas and the increase of roadway traffic, litter will continue to grow.

With an estimated 1.1 billion pieces of litter collecting along Texas roadsides each year, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to keep our roads clean and beautiful.

In the Corpus Christi District there are over 50 active groups in the 10 counties that participate each year in the "Don't Mess With Texas" Trash-Off. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) extends its gratitude to them for their participation in this event every year. The members of these groups give freely of their time to help TxDOT maintain the natural beauty of our state roadways. They not only participate in the Trash-Off but they participate all year long.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK.

For information on Adopt A Highway, please contact Frances Garza by phone at 361/808-2231 or by e-mail at frances.garza@txdot.gov.



Area Legislators Express Interest In District Projects



During the Coastal Bend Legislative Day at the State Capitol in Austin on March 1, area legislators expressed interest in maintenance and construction projects undertaken in the Corpus Christi District.

District Engineer John Casey and Public Information Officer Tom Tagliabue met with four State Representatives (Todd Hunter, Connie Scott, J.M. Lozano and Jose Aliseda) and their staff and staff of two State Senators (Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa and Glenn Hegar) to discuss major projects in their respective legislative districts and to talk about transportation funding needs, especially for highway maintenance.

The TxDOT staff were among more than 100 Coastal Bend officials and residents who took part in the effort to raise awareness of the legislative policy and financial priorities in Coastal Bend communities.

Sen. Hinojosa’s staff expressed interest in the I-69 Corridor segments and the future replacement of the Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi and the status

of projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Sen. Hegar’s staff discussed the upcoming letting of the Copano Bay Bridge (State Highway 35) project and the high cost of highway maintenance in rural counties due to oilfield truck traffic.

State Representatives Scott, Aliseda and Lozano are all first-term legislators and were briefed on the status of projects in their respective districts – Interstate 37/Joe Fulton Corridor in Nueces County, U.S. 59 passing lanes in Duval and Live Oak Counties, U.S. 181/SH 123 intersection in Karnes County and U.S. 77 in Nueces and Kleberg Counties.

The Corpus Christi District provides monthly updates to area legislators on the status of major maintenance and construction projects in their districts.

State Rep. Connie Scott, District Aide Jaime Powell and TxDOT Corpus Christi District Engineer John Casey discuss projects during Coastal Bend Legislative Day.

Shattered Dreams Promotes Awareness



The accident scene is horrifically typical of any head-on drunk driving accident seen on police blotters and splashed across television or newspapers with mangled vehicles, injured victims and an army of paramedics, firefighters and law enforcement officers. In this chaotic scene one teenager is "arrested" for drunk driving and four of his friends and classmates lay severely injured or dead. Banquete High School students and teachers stand somberly watching the scene unfold and guard their eyes as a Halo Flight helicopter takes one of the injured students to a nearby trauma center and the deceased classmate is zipped up in a body bag and taken to a local funeral home. Stark reality is the goal.

Thus begins a teen alcohol awareness program known as Shattered Dreams - a two-day program created at the South Texas Injury Prevention and Research Center in San Antonio. It is an experiential program that teaches the students that the irresponsibility of drinking and driving can end all your dreams. Shattered Dreams requires the active participation of students, parents, educators and various

organizations in the community. Since 1999, the Coastal Bend Youth Alcohol Awareness Coalition has worked to educate local youth on the dangers of drinking and driving. The TxDOT-Corpus Christi District is one of several state and local agencies including police, fire, EMS, hospitals, HALO Flight, the Education Service Center, Community in Schools program, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and participating schools districts. TxDOT usually assists with sound system, microphones, photography, traffic control/road closures, drunk goggles, tombstones and personnel. Schools in Alice, Calallen, Port Aransas and Robstown have held Shattered Dreams programs since 1999.

Shattered Dreams consists of four parts, including the dramatic crash reenactment. The second involves the "Living Dead," which are student participants who are pulled out of class approximately every 15 minutes by the Grim Reaper. Mock death notifications and obituaries are presented to their classmates by uniformed police officers. The participants' faces are painted white and they are not allowed to communicate with anyone the rest of the day. They represent

the people who die in the United States from an alcohol-related car crash.

After school, the students start the third part of the program - the overnight retreat. At the retreat the students participate in activities ranging from team building to a presentation on the dangers of drinking and driving. They also write letters to loved ones that say everything they wish they would have said when they were alive.

The final component is the Funeral/Assembly where student participants and their parents share their experiences from the previous day with the rest of the students at the school. Other speakers at the assembly include school officials, community members and real victims of alcohol-related crashes. Counseling is provided after the assembly, as well as the rest of the two-day event.

Spotlight on Traffic Signals Section

With Bill Gunn

Mission/Purpose

To keep the traffic signal systems (closed loop systems, school zones, flashing lights, stop signs, signalized intersections, roadway lighting and illumination) operating as designed and to efficiently and safely move traffic.

“When you drive from any point to any point how well the signals operate determines how long it takes you to get there – if you have to go through signals. Truth be known, when I started here 22 years ago, we had everything from spit and baling wire to new technology. What we have now is pretty well standardized and state of the art.”

Differences Within District

In cities with a population below 50,000, TxDOT installs and maintains lights and signals. In cities with a population above 50,000 (i.e., Corpus Christi), cities are responsible for the lights with the exception of the controlled access highways such as SH 358.

“Generally it’s driven by population and traffic. If you’re going through Goliad you’re going to have three traffic lights. There’s not a lot of traffic. There’s not a lot of illumination there although there are a few segments. If you go to Refugio you won’t have a lot of illumination. You’ll have five traffic signals. Robstown you won’t have a lot of illumination – although we’re putting an illumination system in for the city who will operate and maintain the operation. You’ll have a handful of signals. In Alice you’ve got even more. The more population, the more traffic, and more signals and lighting to help them move safely.

“The biggest trend we have right now is modernizing the equipment that we have out there. We’re getting them to where we can actually monitor them in real time. I’m working on getting it where the guys in the crew can monitor a signal in real time from their house before heading out to the location. Quite often we’re dealing with video detection issues and they don’t normally fix that at night. They’ll make a timing or detection change to alleviate the issue until we can fix it in the daytime.”

Damage Claims Programs

We started a new effort in November 2010 to seek reimbursement from responsible parties for damage to TxDOT signs, signal poles, guardrails, lights and other equipment as the result of an auto accident. Carlos Carrillo matches an accident to the roadway, the task number, and works up a bill for review by the Maintenance Section. Once approved, the Regional Office sends a bill to the responsible party – an individual driver, an insurance company or a private company. Since inception of the program through early March 2011, there were about 200 claims for damages caused by auto accidents valued at \$302,000 in equipment and labor. More than \$50,000 has been reimbursed by responsible parties. We are concentrating on current (2010-2011) accidents, but can go back as far as 2006.

“There’s no statute of limitations. We’ll send them a bill if we can identify them positively. We’ll try, but we have to be able to document the repair to a degree and if we are not sure, we will not bill them.”

Electric Service Inventory

The district pays a lot for electric service for its signals and lights, but throughout the years the oversight of utility accounts has been rather disorganized. For example, there was one account in Corpus Christi with 60 traffic signals on it, and finding one signal out of 60 is not an easy job. An intern is going out to find every electric pole serving TxDOT signals, lighting, traffic counters, etc., getting GPS coordinates for it, confirming a 9-1-1 address for the pole and then establishing a new account with the utility provider. When the project is done, the district anticipates establishing 1,500 to 2,000 accounts versus the current 700 to 800 accounts. The district expects considerable savings from the project. The long term goal with this project is to get all of the services metered so we are getting what we pay for from the utility.

“We have got accounts that don’t exist, but we’re still paying for them because of so many years of unmetered service. It was too simple. If you need a disconnect you cut the drop, but if you didn’t do the paperwork, the bill never goes away.”

Service Awards



5 YEAR SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Rodolfo Chapa, Mario "Gabriel" Longoria, DE John Casey, Mark Monroe, Danny DeLeon, Katie Hill



10 YEAR SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

James Skidmore, Woodren Pettis , DE John Casey, Kenneth Wilson, Hipolito Gonzalez



20 YEAR SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Raul Guerra, DE John Casey and Thomas Redding Jr.

15 YEAR SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

No photo of Dolores Gonzalez



25 YEAR SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Carlos Salgado Jr., Anthony Villarreal, Maida Guerra and DE John Casey

Corpus Christi  **ONE**

1701 S. Padre Island Dr.
Corpus Christi, Texas 78416

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED