



ONE PORT ARANSAS

SPRING 2012 | THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE PORT ARANSAS FERRY OPERATIONS OF THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



ONE PORT ARANSAS



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Questions, Comments or Suggestions:

The *OneDOT Port Aransas* would love to hear from you. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about this or other issues, please contact Aaron Ames at aaron.ames@txdot.gov or 361-479-2850.



PARDON OUR DUST

Whether it is a new ferry operations building to call home or the replacement of wood fenders and clusters on several ferry ramps, things are changing at the Port Aransas Ferry with a variety of construction jobs currently ongoing and planned for the future.

In late August, the groundbreaking ceremony for the new ferry operations building was held with a handful of speakers from TxDOT and the local community. Joining Howard Gillespie, the manager of ferry operations, were former TxDOT Assistant Executive Director David Casteel, Port Aransas Mayor Keith McMullin and Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce/Tourist Bureau President Ann Vaughan.

The building is expected to take ap-

proximately a year to complete.

The new facility and grounds will encompass over 7,000 square feet. The building itself will be approximately 3,600 square feet, which is more than three times the size of the current operations building.

Included in the building on the ground floor will be rest area amenities including bathrooms and vending machines along with a public information room for the general public. Administrative offices and a conference room will be located on the second level with the third floor serving as the control tower for dispatchers. There will be an additional observation deck atop the roof. The entire building will be ADA-accessible.

The grounds surrounding the building will receive a facelift with the addition of public parking in front of the building, a drop-off area for pedestrians, better walkways to the landing and new landscaping. With an eye on the environment, existing palm trees at the location will be relocated on the site and there will be rainwater collection tanks for landscape irrigation.

Meanwhile, wood clusters and fenders are in the process of being replaced with composite materials.

Russell Marine has completed the replacement of the fenders on the Harbor Island landings. The company is now in the process of completing the upgrade on the Port Aransas landings with work being completed on Ramps 1 and 2, along with the fuel dock and other random clusters.

Ramps that are closed during the week for safety reasons will be cleared for use during the weekend as traffic picks up. Russell Marine has 100 working days to finish the job per the contract. The cost for the project is

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approximately \$3.5 million with grants received from the Federal Highway Administration in 2011 covering most of the cost for the replacement.

Future work is being planned as the result of a pair of grants from the Federal Highway Administration received in late August of 2011 by the Port Aransas Ferry.

On the Port Aransas landings, \$730,000 will be spent for new pilings that are necessitated by the larger, 28-vehicle ferries that came into service this past summer. It will make it safer for the larger ferries when making landings next to the 20-vehicle ferries. When the work is being completed two landings will be down at a time for approximately two weeks. The Harbor Island side of the ferry will also get additional clusters.

A \$790,000 grant was also awarded to the ferry operations that will be spent to make repairs to strengthen the bulkhead on the Harbor Island Landings which was done prior to the Port Aransas side. The repairs are to prevent water intrusion behind the bulkhead through the replacement of rip rap, which are pieces of concrete and rocks, with tumbled concrete in the front and backfilling the bulkhead with flowable concrete after excavating the area.

NEW FERRY OPERATIONS BUILDING

FACT SHEET

GROUND LEVEL

- Public Pavilion w/rest area amenities including restrooms and vending machines
- Public Information Room w/electronic displays
- Public parking

SECOND LEVEL

- Three private offices
- Conference/Training room
- Observation Deck

THIRD LEVEL/VIEWING AREA

- Control Tower Room for dispatch
- Data Room
- Viewing Area on roof above dispatch



Pictured above brick masons begin building the walls for the new Ferry Operations Building in February. At right, the first piling is driven into the ground prior to the laying of the foundation.



At left, the crane from the Russell Marine positions the pilings for the new composite clusters. Above is one of the recently completed fender walls Port Aransas Ramp 2.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...



At far right, Kati Pina's "Reflections of the the Gulf Coast" placed first in the youth division of the 2nd Annual Port Aransas Ferry Art Contest

A G y o t a k u fish rubbing entitled "Flounder Run" by Dinah Bowman placed first in the adult division, while Kati Pina's "Reflections of the Gulf Coast" claimed top honors in the youth division in results from the Second Annual Port Aransas Art Contest announced in November.

Artwork from three adult and three youth were selected to join the inaugural winners from last year's contest. The artwork will be displayed on three vessels – the B.L. DeBerry, the R.E. Sto-



Dinah Bowman's "Flounder Run" pictured above placed first in the adult division of the Second Annual Port Aransas Ferry Art Contest

tzer Jr., and the Arnold W. Oliver. The six selected pieces were part of a entry field of 62 pieces in this year's contest.

The selected pieces of artwork is scheduled to be placed on two of the boats before Spring Break in March and on the third boat after Spring Break. The timing of the installation is based on when each of the three vessels return from their biannual overhauls at the shipyard in Palacios.

Joining Bowman of Portland in the top three of the adult division were Mary Burnett's acrylic painting "The Pleides" and Theresa Coppock's piece "Deep Turtle." Coppock, who also had a winning en-

try in the first contest was the lone adult to

ol Crozier's entry titled "Silver King" was



receive a perfect score of 50.

Bowman, a professional artist from the Coastal Bend, had a second piece in the top 10 — "Redfish" — which was eighth. Burnett and Denise Tidwell also had a pair of top 10 finishes. Burnett's "Static Gull" was seventh to go with her second-place piece "The Pleides." Tidwell's "Day At The Beach" was fifth and her "Sea Texas Wave" tenth.

Placing fourth was Stanley Orchard's "Ferry at Dusk," while Debbie O'Neal's "Do Y'all Wanna Play" came in fifth. Car-

ninth.

In the youth division (18-and-under), Pina's work will be joined by Rebecca Honeck of Port Aransas and Connally Waight also of Port A. Honeck's oil-pastel drawing the "Magenta Spoonbill" was second, while Waight's "Squid" was third.

In all 38 individuals, with Taft High School's Pina leading the way with two perfect 50s, entered the youth division. Runner-up Honeck and Pina were the lone youth entries

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Second-Place Finishers



Pictured above left is Mary Burnett's "The Pleides", while above right is Rebecca Honeck's "Magenta Spoonbill."

Third-Place Finishers



Pictured above left is Theresa Coppecks's "Deep Turtle", while above right is Connally Waight's "Squid"

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to appear on all five scoring sheets. Pina's classmate Casey Trevino was the only entrant other than Pina to place first on a judge's ballot. Her pencil drawing "Gulf Coast Sky" was fifth overall behind Kaylie

Trya of Ricardo Middle School. Tyra finished fourth with her watercolor titled "On the Water."

Rounding out the top 10 in the youth category are Brundrett Middle School's Julie Johnson's "Surf

Day" in sixth. Emma Anderson of Garner Middle School in San Antonio was seventh with a colored-pencil drawing of a fish followed by a watercolor by Ricardo's Miles Powell. A crayon drawing "Break

of Dawn" by Ashby Snow of Port Aransas was ninth with Mariana Medina of Garner 10th with a colored pencil drawing titled "Lonely Beach".

Plans for a third contest next fall are underway.



SPRING BREAK 2012

Boats, staff team to make week a success

The final tally is in for the number of vehicles moved by the Texas Department of Transportation's Port Aransas Ferry Operations during Spring Break 2012 from March 9-18 and the vessels moved the most vehicles it had in several years.

The ferries transported 86,717 vehicles during the 10-day stretch in comparison to 83,100 in 2011. The total was the most vehicles transported since 2005.

Over 8,000 vehicles were transported a day with 32,584 vehicles carried over a three-day stretch from March 15 through March 17. All three days totaled more than 10,000 vehicles moved with a high of 11,851 on March 17.

It was the first time since 2004 that traffic surpassed the 10,000-vehicle mark for at least three days in a row during Spring Break.

The traffic numbers would have been higher if the first three days of Spring Break had not seen reduced traffic

due to inclement weather. Just under 18,000 vehicles crossed the channel the first 72 hours as cool, wet weather persisted. The 17,984 is the fewest number of cars moved during the start of Spring Break since before 2000.

Since 2000, only a three-year period from 2003-2005 saw an annual total with more vehicles ferried than this year. In 2003 and 2004, ferries carried 91,763 and 95,722 vehicles, respectively. Over 88,000 rode the ferry in 2005.

Despite the increase in traffic, wait times were down substantially from previous years.

The wait time for traffic coming from Aransas Pass reached one hour just once during the week at midday on March 17th. For much of the week, the wait was no more than 30 minutes on either side.

The ability to cut wait times while increasing capacity was due in large

<i>YEAR-BY-YEAR TOTALS SINCE 2000</i>	
2000	82,361
2001	84,163
2002	83,835
2003	91,763
2004	95,722
2005	88,610
2006	86,021
2007	86,042
2008	81,267
2009	82,648
2010	82,720
2011	83,100
2012	86,717
Total (Avg.) ..	1,114,969 (85,767)

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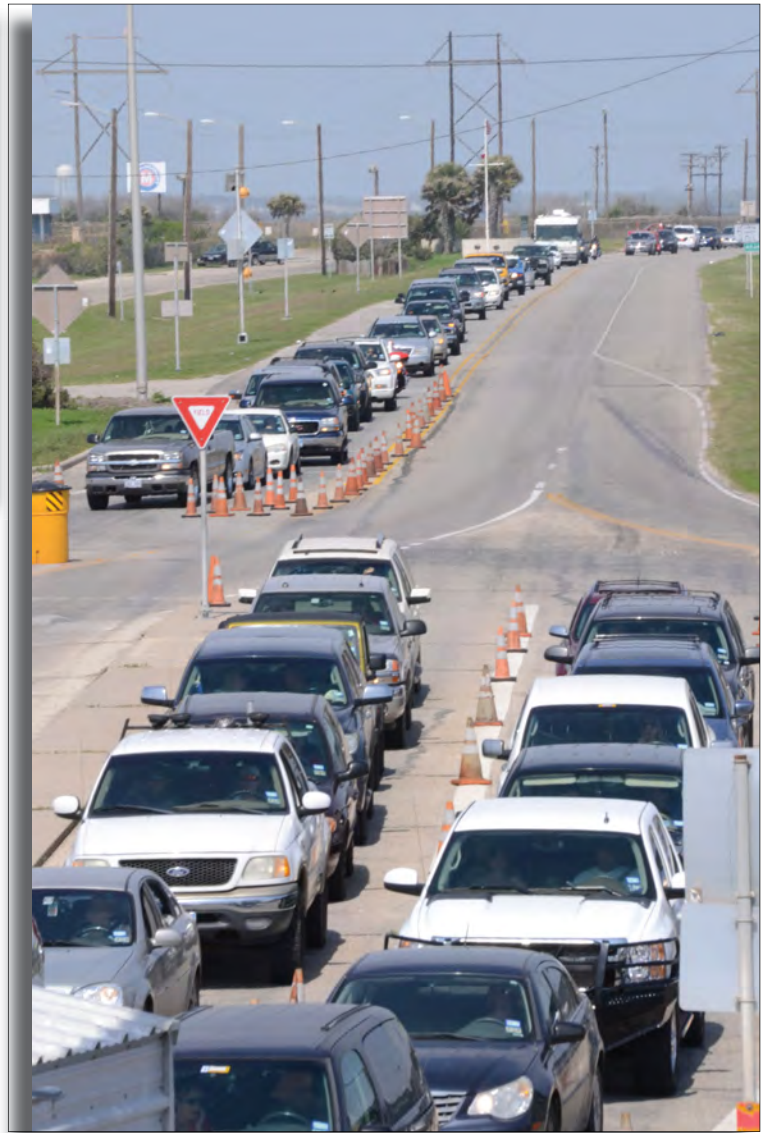


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part to the use of seven vessels all week. The newer 28-vehicle vessels also were a major reason for the success.

“The entire staff at the Port Aransas Ferry worked extremely hard to keep the traffic moving so people could enjoy their time at the beach or for the local traffic to not be hindered by the increase in traffic,” said TxDOT spokesperson Aaron Ames. “To be able to safely move the number of vehicles they did, while keeping the wait times down took a lot of teamwork.”

“This was the first Spring Break where we had the new larger boats which carry 28 vehicles in service and it definitely made an impact. We also were able to keep seven boats going during the peak travel times and had maintenance on site 24 hours a day to take care of engine checks and other issues.”



LONNIE GREGORCYK NAMED INTERIM DE

Longtime Yoakum District Engineer Lonnie Gregorcyk was named the interim District Engineer for the Corpus Christi District on Thursday, April 5 2012. Dee Porter, TxDOT’s Chief People Officer joined Gregorcyk at the district office on Thursday, April 5 to address employees about the change. A search for a replacement is underway.



NEW TxDOT BOSS VISITS CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

New TxDOT Executive Director Phil Wilson visited the Corpus Christi District office on Nov. 21 to introduce himself to the staff. Wilson was hired on Sept. 29 replacing Amadeo Saenz. The former chief of staff for Gov. Rick Perry began on Oct. 17. He was accompanied by Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa - District 20, Commissioner William Meadows, and Coby Chase - then Interim Chief Communications Officer. After introductions he took questions from the audience and addressed concerns over the changes that were occurring throughout the agency.

ARE YOU SIRIUS? THE PORT ARANSAS FERRYBOATS ARE

The Port Aransas Ferry Operations are in the process of adding another feature for customers as the vessels are being fitted with Sirius Satellite Radio. Relaxing music will be played over the vessels loud speakers. The Behrens and Heald were the first two to add the music with work continuing on the small boats. The landings also have music.



STAFF USE UNDERWATER SKILLS TO INSPECT BOATS

Ferry Operations Manager Howard Gillespie and Captain Russell Maddalone have put their diving skills to work multiple times in recent months. Most recently they took the opportunity to dive underneath the Dingwall to inspect the propellers. In other dives they completed underwater hull inspections of the Heald and Behrens.

FERRY OPERATIONS JOINS THE SOCIAL MEDIA REALM

Ferry operations joined the social media world in late 2011 going live with a Twitter page. Along with on-line webcams and status page, Twitter allows customers of the ferry system to follow what is going at the landings. They can find out wait times, delays, weather conditions, etc.



DINGWALL GETTING ENGINE OVERHAUL

Engine work continues on the J.C. Dingwall which received two new engines and marine gears last fall. The maintenance crew handled replacing the engines, while the alignment of the engines was handled by the shipyard. Maintenance is in the process of getting more power out of the vessel so it can safely return to service.



At right, Dan and Pam Norstrom pose with Capt. James Hunter after dropping off the New Year's Eve treat. Vance Brown (above) prepares a cup of hot chocolate.

VISITING COUPLE PROVIDES NEW YEAR'S EVE TREAT FOR WORKERS

In town for New Years, Dan and Pam Norstrom of Boerne showed their appreciation for the hard work performed by all of those at the Port Aransas Ferry landing by donating a special treat.

The couple dropped off hot chocolate and cookies for all working on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The Norstroms spend much of their winters in Port Aransas and use the ferry system each time they make the trip to avoid the hustle and bustle of Corpus Christi.



FERRY EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED

Six Ferry Operations employees were among the 34 Corpus Christi District workers to earn service awards at a recent supervisors meeting.

Captain James Kay was honored for 20 years with TxDOT, while fellow Captain Roy Howe was recognized for 15 years. Ferry Operations Manager Howard Gillespie and Deckhand Cristoval Ruiz received 10-year awards, and Deckhand Victor Sparks a 5-year award.





Pictured at right is the new John W. Johnson ferry in Galveston. It is the sixth-boat in the systems fleet.

JOHNSON IS 6TH BOAT IN GALVESTON FLEET

The John W. Johnson was christened Nov. 18, 2011, as the sixth boat in the fleet of the Texas Department of Transportation's Galveston-Port Bolivar Ferry System. Like the other vessels in the fleet, the Johnson is a double-ended ferry with twin pilot houses. She is named for the chairman of Permian Mud Service Inc., who served on the Texas Transportation Commission from 2000 until 2007, including four years as its chairman. Galveston's ferries are traditionally named after commission leaders.

The boat was designed by Alan C. McClure Associates Inc., naval architects and engineers, of Houston and built at Conrad Shipyard LLC in Morgan City, La., as Hull No. 831. The contract was let on Aug. 30, 2007. The keel was laid on Jan. 21, 2008.

The Johnson can carry about 70 cars and light trucks or six to eight 18-wheel trucks weighing as much as

80,000 pounds each. It can accommodate as many as 500 passengers. Its overall length is 265 feet. Its overall width is 65 feet. Its draft is 9 feet 6 inches. Its cruising speed is 12 knots

It is manned by a crew of six: a captain, an engineer, an oiler, two able seamen and one ordinary seaman. It carries two rescue boats and is equipped with sophisticated systems for fire detection and fire suppression, as well as an advanced system that monitors all vessel operations and sounds alarms whenever a problem is detected.

The vessel is of conventional diesel-electric design with modifications that increase its maneuverability significantly. The two main engines (GE 8V228 Tier II) generate 1,734 horsepower each at 900 rpm, powering two main generators that operate at 600 volts AC and generate 1,300 kilowatts each. The Johnson's variable frequency drive powers four Siemens 600-

volt AC drive motors that generate 1,150 horsepower each. That power is applied via a Kort Nozzle propeller system that produces 2,600 horsepower at the vessel drive shaft. This power is directed to a triple-rudder system, which provides the Johnson with its advanced maneuverability characteristics.

The boat also is equipped with a harbor generator and an emergency generator, both of which are D9 Caterpillar units that operate at 600 volts AC and generate 250 kilowatts.

