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SAFETY REPORT

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS ASPHALT PAVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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## TARGET RIDE TO QUALITY:

TXAPA'S ANNUAL MEETING SHOWCASES  
PARTNERSHIP, SCHOLARSHIP, AND  
CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

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WINTER 2024



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# BUILDING ON PROGRESS: A YEAR OF GROWTH, COLLABORATION, AND IMPACT

Glen Dvorak  
Hunter Industries Ltd.  
President—TXAPA



**A**s the year draws to a close, so does my term as TXAPA President. Thanks to our members, committees, and staff, it has been a productive and meaningful year for the association. Over the past 12 months, we've made great strides toward advancing both our short-term goals and laying the groundwork for future success. My presidency has been about building on the

solid foundations set by those who came before me while exploring new opportunities to grow and adapt to the evolving needs of our industry. Together, we have strengthened our association's mission to foster innovation, knowledge, and collaboration.

Throughout the year, I've shared updates with you in each edition of *Texas Asphalt*. The Winter Edition is no different, but it feels particularly special as it reflects on the achievements highlighted at our Annual Meeting. Let's take a moment to recognize some of the incredible milestones from this event.

- **Record-Breaking Attendance:** This year's Annual Meeting saw an unprecedented turnout of more than 800 attendees, underscoring the dedication and enthusiasm of our industry and creating an atmosphere of collaboration and shared purpose.
- **Scholarship Fund Milestone:** I am thrilled to announce that, thanks to your tremendous generosity, we raised a record-breaking \$915,000 for TXAPA's scholarship program. This achievement

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exemplifies the strength and unity of our association and highlights our shared commitment to empowering the next generation of leaders. Your contributions will have a life-changing impact, helping students overcome financial barriers and pursue their educational dreams. This program will shape the future of our workforce, paving the way for a more innovative and resilient industry.

- **TxDOT Partnership and the Asphalt Pavement Performance Improvement Program (AAPIP):** Another exciting announcement from the Annual Meeting

was TxDOT's new education initiative, the Asphalt Pavement Performance Improvement Program (AAPIP). TXAPA will work closely with TxDOT to develop and implement this comprehensive program, which will provide essential resources and facilitate knowledge-sharing across the industry. This partnership marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance the quality, durability, and safety of Texas roads.

This year would not have been possible without the dedication, expertise, and hard work of the TXAPA staff. Behind the scenes,

**I AM THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT, THANKS TO YOUR TREMENDOUS GENEROSITY, WE RAISED A RECORD-BREAKING \$915,000 FOR TXAPA'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**



they have worked tirelessly to ensure the success of our initiatives, events, and programs. Their commitment to excellence and continuous improvement has been instrumental in achieving the many milestones we are celebrating today.

Our association's committees also deserve recognition for their invaluable contributions. These dedicated volunteers—from various corners of the industry—have taken on key initiatives, fostering collaboration and ensuring that TXAPA continues to meet the needs of its members. Their work ensures that we remain a forward-thinking, innovative, and solution-focused organization.

I also want to take a moment to reflect on the legacy of our past leaders. Their vision and dedication laid the foundation for the progress we've made, and their efforts continue to inspire us. This year, we have built on their accomplishments, maintaining TXAPA's reputation for excellence while navigating new challenges and opportunities.

As I pass the torch, I am excited to welcome Eric Suarez as the next President of TXAPA. Eric brings a wealth of experience, fresh ideas, and a deep passion for our industry. I have no doubt that he will lead the association with the same energy, focus, and dedication that he has demonstrated throughout his career. Please join me in supporting Eric as he embarks on this new chapter for our association.

It has been a tremendous honor to serve as President of this remarkable association. Thank you for placing your trust in me, for your collaboration, and for your unwavering commitment to advancing our industry. I am proud of what we have accomplished together and excited for what the future holds. With your continued support, I know that TXAPA will achieve even greater things in the years to come. □

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# NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVING SUCCESS WITH TXAPA



Harold C. Mullen  
Chief Executive Officer  
Texas Asphalt Pavement Association

In 2024, the challenges of working in the Texas asphalt paving industry may seem daunting, but with determination, the right resources, and strong partnerships, success is always within reach. The road to success in this industry is often a challenge, but just as the Hall of Fame football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.” This pursuit of excellence is what drives professionals in the asphalt paving industry to continually improve and rise above the obstacles they face.

One of the biggest challenges in the Texas asphalt paving industry is the sheer scale of projects. Texas, with its growing population, increasing infrastructure needs and climate extremes, requires asphalt paving contractors to handle a wide range of jobs—from highways and urban streets to smaller local roads and parking lots. Weather conditions, particularly the high temperatures and unpredictable storms, can create delays and affect the quality of work if not properly managed. Moreover, the demand for higher performance in paving materials and the integration of sustainable practices means the industry must stay on the cutting edge of technology and best practices.

However, success in the asphalt paving industry is not achieved alone. The Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA) plays a pivotal role in helping contractors and industry partners overcome these challenges. TXAPA provides a wealth of educational opportunities, offering training programs that help professionals stay up to date with the latest techniques, technologies, and regulatory standards. This continual education ensures that paving

companies can meet the growing demands for quality, durability, and environmental responsibility in their projects.

Additionally, TXAPA offers technical expertise that industry stakeholders can lean on to solve specific challenges in the field. Whether it’s troubleshooting a mix design, improving project efficiency, or ensuring proper quality control, the association’s resources help contractors navigate complex issues and maintain high standards of work. TXAPA’s team can deliver guidance, to help ensure that paving projects are completed successfully despite the challenges.

Teamwork is another crucial element of success in the asphalt paving industry, and TXAPA fosters this collaborative spirit. Through networking opportunities, partnership meetings, and connections with industry leaders, TXAPA fosters stronger, more productive relationships that drive the industry forward. When contractors, suppliers, and agencies work together, the industry thrives, leading to smoother projects and better outcomes.

Just as the asphalt paving industry demands resilience and determination, so too does being a Mississippi State football fan in 2024. The wins have been few, and the cowbell sits mostly in silence. But as the Bulldogs focus on building for the future, we know that the perseverance they are showing will lead to success on the field once again. Similarly, in the Texas asphalt paving industry, perseverance through challenges, coupled with the support of TXAPA, ensures that success will come. By chasing perfection, as Vince Lombardi advised, contractors in Texas can find excellence not only in their work but in the lasting impact they have on the state’s infrastructure. □

**THIS PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IS  
WHAT DRIVES PROFESSIONALS IN  
THE ASPHALT PAVING INDUSTRY TO  
CONTINUALLY IMPROVE AND RISE  
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# PAVING THE FUTURE WITH TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

Matthew Wheatley  
Highway Data Systems USA  
Associate Member Chair



**R**elationships remain at the heart of our industry, forming the foundation for both business and personal friendships that extend beyond our work lives. Through these connections, TXAPA brings people together to collaborate on goals that benefit both our industry and the communities we serve. As Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame 2024 inductee, Johnny Weisman reminds us: “Give what you can from the three T’s—Treasure, Time, and Talent.” From my own experience, following this principle has brought rewards many times over, both personally and professionally.

This spirit of collaboration and generosity positions TXAPA not only as a relationship-builder but also as a leader in the industry. Our financial and strategic position has never been stronger, placing us at the forefront of growth and innovation. With the vision of our CEO and board, we are poised to expand our reach across the state and increase the specification and use of asphalt in Texas, driving the future of our industry forward.

The results of this collaborative spirit were evident at the MAPS Conference held in Waco in May 2024. Thanks to the dedicated

members who contributed time, people, and resources, the event was a tremendous success, breaking even for the first time.

Similarly, the two golf tournaments organized by the Associate Members Committee at the TXAPA membership and annual meetings raised over \$40,000 for the scholarship fund, contributing to TXAPA’s record-setting total of \$915,000 raised this year.

Serving as the Associates Chair has been a deeply rewarding experience, both personally and professionally. This role has allowed me to broaden my horizons while working alongside some of the most talented individuals in our industry. For anyone considering involvement with TXAPA’s committees, I highly encourage you to join. Your time will be well spent, and you will build relationships with some of the finest people in the business.

In closing, I am grateful for the privilege of leading the Associate Members Committee and for the energy, passion, and dedication my fellow committee members bring to every meeting and event. Together, we’ve proven that contributions of time, talent, and treasure not only fuel TXAPA’s growth but also create friendships and connections that make our industry truly special. □

**AS TEXAS ASPHALT PAVEMENT HALL OF FAME 2024 INDUCTEE, JOHNNY WEISMAN REMINDS US: “GIVE WHAT YOU CAN FROM THE THREE T’S—TREASURE, TIME, AND TALENT.”**





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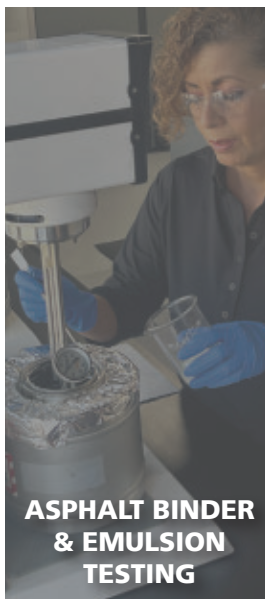
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# AN ASPHALT TRADITION UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Andy Cascione, PhD, PE  
Valero Marketing and Supply Co.  
Major Associate Member Chair



Texas has seen tremendous population growth over the last several decades, and with that comes higher traffic volumes. The need for superior pavements in Texas has never been greater. Advancements in asphalt materials design like Superpave, Stone Matrix Asphalt, Thin Overlay Mixtures, and others have allowed asphalt technology to keep up with the increasing performance safe and smooth roads demand.

We are fortunate enough in Texas to have top-tier, nationally renowned universities that conduct some of the most advanced asphalt materials research in the world. It is regularly featured at national conferences and published in top scientific journals. Similarly, TxDOT has one of the most impressive DOT materials testing labs for collaboration and internal research.

Recently there has been a number of requests within TXAPA's membership to have Texas universities, agencies, and consultants share their research findings with TXAPA and their membership. Some of the research could impact future specifications or be geared towards material producers and contractors for future implementation.

TxDOT already does a fantastic job of communicating research updates at a high level to TXAPA members during the annual and membership meetings, but the time available during the meetings to present those updates is limited. If a separate forum was available, there would be more time to present research at a deeper level with greater detail and to get industry feedback.

At first, the Major Associate member committee raised the need for such a forum on asphalt binder materials, followed by a similar request from the Level II Mix Design committee, but on mixtures and aggregates. Since all three topics are interrelated and of interest to TXAPA members, the idea of having a forum on all pavement-related research topics was introduced.

From there, the MASTERS was born. I'm not talking about golf, green jackets, or dramatic Sundays (cue the music), but an annual forum titled Materials and Asphalt Technology Research Summit

(MASTERS), or simply Research Summit if you don't want to get too fancy with the name.

The first research event TXAPA hosted was in December 2023. At least 40 people attended the event, which was held during an afternoon at TXAPA's headquarters in Buda. It was mostly focused on asphalt binder materials with presentations by the Center for Transportation Research (CTR) at UT Austin and by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI). With the success of that event, TXAPA held the next forum and first official MASTERS event on July 24-25, 2024, in conjunction with a sustainability summit. This time additional universities like UT El Paso also presented. It was a resounding success with close to 100 in attendance. TXAPA graciously hosted lunch, dinner, and an evening reception.

During the MASTERS, professors and researchers from Texas institutions presented research on aggregate friction, combining RAP with SAC-A aggregates, fine aggregate's impact on skid resistance, balanced mix design, updates on asphalt binder testing and specification development, and more. The time allowed attendees to meet one another and network, and having an event dedicated to asphalt technology research in Texas allowed for more in-depth presentations and Q&A time.

The goal is for TXAPA to host a MASTERS event each year. The amount of asphalt research being conducted in Texas is nothing short of impressive, and the impact that research has on future asphalt pavement performance affects how we produce our materials. It's my belief the MASTERS at TXAPA will have tremendous value for industry, agencies, and academia, and will drive needed asphalt research. I hope to see you at the next MASTERS in 2025, and together we will tee off our own tradition that will be unlike any other. □

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# TARGET RIDE TO QUALITY:

## TXAPA'S ANNUAL MEETING SHOWCASES PARTNERSHIP, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO QUALITY



Jim Warren deconstructs an award winning pavement with contractors who have won the prestigious award. Left to right: Oscar Cuellar, IOC Company, LLC; James Fields, James Hamilton Construction Co.; Corey Keller, Allen Keller Company; Jim Warren, TXAPA.

**T**he TXAPA Annual Meeting this year was truly remarkable, setting records and celebrating the asphalt pavement industry. From the moment it began, the event was fueled by camaraderie and filled with the spirit of partnership that change makes our achievements possible. Regarded as the most highly anticipated industry event of the year, the TXAPA Annual Meeting is the place to network with colleagues, catch up with lifelong friends, and build new and meaningful connections.

The theme of this year's meeting was "Target Ride to Quality," emphasizing the idea that engineering superior ride quality leads to superior asphalt pavements. Sessions throughout the week were designed to explore this theme from multiple angles. TXAPA's

Jim Warren, Director of Engineering and Technology led an insightful panel discussion on award-winning pavements, Dr. Charles Gurganus (Texas A&M University) presented on improving quality at intersections, and Travis Patton addressed sustainability,

outlining a plan for utilizing more recycled asphalt pavement. Discussion centering on heavy-duty pavements, TxDOT's liquid asphalt binder program, and the Asphalt Pavement Quality Initiative emphasized the importance of partnership in achieving shared goals. A key



Taking aim and putting safety first during the sporting clay tournament.



Golfers gather for the TXAPA Annual Golf Tournament benefiting the Scholarship Program.



Women of Asphalt Texas members listen intently at the Branch Member Dinner.



Angie Hogan (right) congratulates out-going Women of Asphalt Texas Branch Chair Jennifer Long.



TXAPA President Glen Dvorak and Chris Cowen, TxDOT, discuss quality initiatives.



highlight was the announcement of the APPIP (Asphalt Pavement Performance Improvement Program), which is a result of the industry's ongoing commitment to innovation and quality. The week kicked off on Monday with the Annual TXAPA Golf Tournament. More

than a fun filled day on the green, the tournament comprises a significant portion of TXAPA Scholarship Program fundraising. Also on Monday, the Sporting Clay Shoot at the National Shooting Complex continues to attract a larger number of participants every

year. In partnership with Lone Star Paving, Jim Warren and Alex Flores continue to refine the event with contests and awards, making it a must attend for TXAPA's shooting enthusiasts. That evening, the Women of Asphalt Texas Branch hosted their second annual branch





TxDOT Chief Engineer Lance Simmons (center) with TxDOT Director of District Operations, Carl Johnson (Left) and TXAPA President Glen Dvorak (Right, Hunter Industries, Ltd.).



TxDOT's Chris Cowen presiding over the TxDOT-TXAPA Quality Asphalt Pavement Awards.

**MEMBERS  
RAISE  
\$915,000  
TO FUND TXAPA  
SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM**

member dinner, where Chair Jennifer Long (Reece Albert, Inc.) and incoming Vice Chair Angie Hogan (McCourt Equipment) showcased the year's successes and shared plans for 2025. Women of Asphalt Texas is the second largest Women of Asphalt Branch in the United States, having grown at a record pace since its 2020 inception. The night continued with the always-popular Casino Party, bringing out the high rollers and keeping the excitement going strong. Revelers were able to watch the game on two giant screens while playing the Vegas standards hoping to win an array of fantastic door prizes.

Tuesday focused on recognizing excellence, starting with the presentation of the Bob Gallaway Award. Each year, TXAPA recognizes an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the asphalt paving industry in Texas, demonstrating leadership, innovation, and a commitment to advancing the field. Named in honor of Bob Gallaway, a pioneer in asphalt research and education, the award celebrates those whose dedication reflects his passion for engineering excellence and knowledge sharing.

The 2024 recipient was TxDOT's Chief Engineer, Lance Simmons. Simmons has been instrumental in driving

improvements across the state's transportation infrastructure, fostering collaboration between public and private sectors, and championing innovative practices that ensure the longevity and sustainability of Texas roadways. Simmons accepted the award from longtime friend, fellow East Texan, and TxDOT retiree, Michael Lee, who is now with the AGC of Texas.

Building on this theme of excellence, the spotlight then shifted to the TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Awards, which honored 11 standout projects. The celebration continued as four outstanding individuals received the QC/QA Technician of the Year Awards, followed by the announcement of the winners of the Dr. Jon Epps Quality Seal Coat Awards. Dr. Vince Hafeli then delivered a sobering and heartfelt talk about his personal mental health journey. He emphasized the importance of the industry recognizing warning signs and offering support to those in need, underscoring that the well-being of its people is just as critical as achieving professional excellence.

The day ended on a fun note with TXAPA's first-ever Pickleball Tournament, which showcased the competitive spirit of more than 50 players. ROMCO Equipment conceived and generously hosted the event, and the tournament will return for the 50th Annual Meeting in 2025.

On Wednesday, the focus shifted to safety and recognition. The day began with TxDOT's Robert Godina, Section Director of Safety Operations in the Occupational Safety Division, reporting on findings from the FY23 safety study underscoring the importance of safety in the industry. During the TXAPA-TxDOT Joint Luncheon, TXAPA CEO Harold Mullen presided over the induction of the Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame class of 2024. TXAPA Pioneers John Deatherage and Charles Smoot were inducted posthumously, with Smoot's daughters, Cindy Riola and Susan Sims, proudly accepting on his behalf. Modern-day industry stalwarts Gary Corley (Kirby-Smith Machinery) and Johnny Weisman (Hunter Industries, Ltd.), with a combined 80+ years in the industry, were welcomed to the stage with thunderous applause. The 2024 inductee represents our industries best, shaping the asphalt industry with their dedication and innovation.

Wednesday night brought one of the most memorable experiences of the Annual Meeting: the live and silent



David Kopp (Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions) and teammate Tommy Smith (TxDOT) and John Lamond (TransTech Systems, Inc.) and teammate Michael Baba (Modern Hydrogen) take first and second place respectively, in the first-ever TXAPA Pickleball Tournament hosted by ROMCO.





**Technician of the Year Tracy Rivera (A.L. Helmcamp) admires her award.**

auctions benefiting the TXAPA Scholarship Program. Known as "Scholarship Night," this lively celebration focuses on paying forward the good fortune shared by everyone in the room. The TXAPA Scholarship Program currently supports 51 recipients with full and partial scholarships. A full scholarship, which is awarded to most recipients, provides \$10,000 in assistance per academic year. The generosity of TXAPA members is unmatched in funding this initiative. After an hour of action-packed bidding, the TXAPA team worked quickly to tally the year's fundraising. They announced a record-breaking \$915,000, surpassing expectations and setting a new benchmark for supporting aspiring young professionals in the field. The evening concluded with an unforgettable performance by William Beckmann, a rising star who brought down the house with his incredible talent. The night was both entertaining and impactful, thanks to the efforts of the Scholarship Auction Committee and second-year Chair JB Closner.

Throughout the event, attendees enjoyed a robust exhibitor presence, showcasing the depth and diversity of the asphalt industry. Discussions on critical topics, including the Asphalt Pavement Performance Information Program (APPIP) and mental health, added depth to the event's agenda, addressing important challenges within the industry.

This year's TXAPA Annual Meeting was a powerful reminder of the strength, generosity, and passion within our industry. From the awards and inductees to



**Dr. Vince Hafeli tells his moving personal story to illustrate the need for mental health awareness.**



**William Beckmann takes the stage.**

the scholarship fundraising and engaging activities, it was a week filled with celebration and progress. With attendance and exhibitor participation at an all-time high, the future of the industry looks brighter than ever.

We look forward to building on this momentum for an even bigger and better 50th Annual Meeting next year! □



**A packed house gets ready to start the bidding.**



**Breaking the record: TXAPA members band together to raise a record \$915k for the TXAPA Scholarship Program.**



**TXAPA CEO Harold Mullen announces the tally.**



# TEXAS ASPHALT PAVEMENT HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

BY HAROLD MULLEN, CEO - TXAPA

## HONORING PIONEERS AND LEADERS

The Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame, established in 2023, was created to honor individuals whose contributions to the asphalt pavement industry and TXAPA have been both substantial and enduring. These individuals have demonstrated remarkable career achievements, made significant unselfish contributions to the association, and have shown a sustained commitment to advancing asphalt pavement.

As we face new and unprecedented challenges in the industry, it is crucial to acknowledge the leadership of great pioneers has always been a guiding force. The necessity for strong, visionary leaders

remains constant, and the Hall of Fame serves as a reminder of the pivotal role these individuals play in shaping the future of asphalt pavement in Texas.

In 2023, the Hall of Fame welcomed its inaugural class, which included Gene Carrier, Chuck Fuller, John Miller, and Murray Ricks. This year, we are proud to induct four more trailblazers: John Deatherage, Charlie Smoot, Gary Corley, and Johnny Weisman. These individuals have laid the groundwork for where we stand today, each playing a vital role in advancing our industry.

## JOHN DEATHERAGE: INTEGRITY AND ENDURING COMMITMENT



**John and Beth Deatherage at TXAPA's 36th Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas—Sept. 2010.**

John Deatherage, an Eagle Scout, Scout Master, and Marine combat veteran, exemplified integrity and leadership throughout his career. Holding an engineering degree from SMU and a master's in asphalt technology from Iowa State, John's dedication extended well beyond his more than 60 years of marriage—his commitment to the asphalt industry was just as enduring.

John began his career at Texas Bitulithic in the 1950s, working his way up to oversee the asphalt division and eventually serving as Vice

President of Fort Worth operations. His service to TXAPA began in the early 1960s and spanned more than four decades. Whenever the industry faced a crisis, John was the person called upon to find solutions.

John served on numerous committees, held two terms on the Board of Directors, was Treasurer in 1975, President in 1977, and became a Life Member in 2003. One of his key achievements was helping the industry adapt to new technologies, including better material handling, electronic controls on pavers, the use of hot mix black base mixtures, and pioneering recycling efforts. His work on emission controls and air quality also paved the way for workable solutions for all stakeholders.

John's leadership shone brightest during a financial crisis at TXAPA in the mid-1970s. As Treasurer in 1975, he reported that the association had only \$648 on hand. However, his proactive approach and strategic planning saved the association from disaster and ensured its future viability.

John's positive, cooperative attitude left an indelible mark on TXAPA, and his legacy continues to inspire. It is with great honor that TXAPA inducts John Deatherage into the Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame.

**Service spanning decades: John Deatherage (right) shares a laugh at the 3rd Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas—Sept. 1977.**



# CHARLIE SMOOT: CHAMPION OF QUALITY AND COLLABORATION



Charlie Smoot's daughters, Cindy Riola (left) and Susan Sims (right), proudly accepted on behalf of their father at the induction ceremony.

Charlie Smoot's journey with TXAPA began in 1974, hired initially to spread the word about quality asphalt pavement. However, just three months later, Charlie found himself stepping

into the role of Executive Director following the unexpected resignation of his predecessor. As a former TxDOT engineer, Charlie wondered what he had gotten himself into, but his transition into association management proved to be a significant turning point for both TXAPA and the asphalt industry in Texas.

Charlie's tireless advocacy for asphalt quality made him a key figure in building relationships with TxDOT, local governments, and the Texas Air Quality Control Board (now the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality or TCEQ). His work with the Air Control Board led to a workable general permit for asphalt plants, which is still in use and remains a foundational milestone in our industry.

As Executive Director from 1974 to 1996, Charlie played a pivotal role in driving numerous industry advancements, including the development of the QC/QA Specification and the establishment of the Hot Mix Asphalt Center for Certification. His leadership also spurred the research and implementation of Full Depth Perpetual Pavement Specifications, the introduction of SMA and Superpave

technologies, and the creation of TXAPA's Annual Meeting.

Charlie understood the importance of communication, and his creation of the *Hot Mix Asphalt News* newsletter—along with his popular "My Nickel" column—helped further the goals of TXAPA. He believed that the dissemination of information was vital to the industry's success, and his commitment to spreading the "gospel of asphalt pavements" was unwavering.

TXAPA is honored to recognize Charlie Smoot's enduring contributions by inducting him into the Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame.



Charlie Smoot speaking at the University of Texas at Austin.

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# GARY CORLEY: A LIFETIME OF DEDICATION TO THE CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY

Gary Corley has dedicated his entire career to the construction equipment business, following in the footsteps of his father, who was also deeply involved in the industry. His long-standing presence in this field is a testament to his commitment and expertise. As one of the earliest connections many professionals in the industry have made, Gary's influence has been felt by countless individuals and organizations.

In his many roles, Gary has served two terms as Chair of TXAPA's Associate Member Advisory Committee and two terms on the TXAPA Board of Directors. His reputation as a great communicator, deep thinker, relationship builder, and someone who can adapt to any situation has made him a valued member of the association. These attributes have earned him a permanent seat at TXAPA's annual Strategic Planning Session, where his insights have proven invaluable.

## PIONEERING COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVES

One of Gary's most notable qualities is his visionary approach to advancing TXAPA and the broader industry. His forward-thinking ideas have led to numerous initiatives that have shaped the organization over the years.

He was instrumental in developing an extensive education program for TXAPA members. As Chair of the Training and Education Committee, he spearheaded efforts to bring members together to design and implement a comprehensive statewide paving and compaction educational program, setting a new standard for industry-wide training.

Gary also championed the creation of platforms for associate members to promote innovative products to regular members. This vision became reality through the Associate Member Technical Showcases, which facilitated stronger collaboration among members and helped disseminate knowledge about the latest technological advancements.

## ENCOURAGING INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

His vision didn't stop there. Recognizing the need for a more formalized exhibit and trade show program, Gary led the Associate Member Advisory Committee in transitioning from technical showcases to what ultimately



**A mentor to many: Gary Corley (center) with (from left to right) David Cucinelli, Jeff Flood, wife Rose Corley, daughter Wendy Muzquiz, Justin Ashlock, and Matt White.**

became the MAPS meeting. This initiative provided members with an enhanced platform to showcase innovations and network with peers.

In addition to his forward-looking contributions, Gary has played a critical role in preserving TXAPA's history. He became the association's official historian and authored *50 Years of Quality*, a comprehensive history of TXAPA. He has recently supplemented this work with an update, ensuring that TXAPA's legacy is well-documented for future generations.

## PREPARING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Gary's commitment to nurturing the next generation of industry leaders is perhaps his

most enduring contribution. He emphasized the importance of preparing future leaders and played a pivotal role in shaping TXAPA's workforce development programs, ensuring that the industry remains strong and well-prepared for the challenges ahead.

Through his work as a mentor, initiator, and promoter, Gary has left an indelible mark on the industry. His professionalism, dedication, and collaborative spirit have earned him widespread respect and admiration.

## A WELL-DESERVED HONOR

Gary Corley's contributions to the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association and the industry are immeasurable. It is with great pride that he is welcomed into the Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame.



**Gary Corley with his Glen Dvorak and Harold Mullen.**

# JOHNNY WEISMAN: GENEROUS LEADERSHIP

Words alone cannot adequately describe the remarkable career of Johnny Weisman. He is a rare leader whose focus and generosity have had a profound impact on the industry, and without his efforts, many of the advancements we celebrate today would not have been possible.

## A CHAMPION OF THE ASPHALT INDUSTRY

Johnny Weisman's approach has always been straightforward: "What do you need, and how can I help?" This simple yet powerful philosophy has undergirded his success and guided his relationships with organizations like the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA). His innovative mind and passion for continuous improvement make him an invaluable source of ideas that propel both the Association and the industry forward.

Great leaders are often distinguished by their communication skills. Johnny's ability to simplify complex issues and present clear, actionable solutions has earned him the respect of his peers. This talent for breaking down challenges has helped industry leaders and policymakers alike understand the needs and opportunities within the asphalt and highway construction sectors.

Johnny's influence extends far beyond TXAPA. He has become a leading voice at the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Texas, advocating for the highway construction industry on a statewide and national scale. His leadership in educating politicians about the importance of transportation funding and ensuring that those funds are used wisely has been pivotal. Thanks to Johnny's work, along with his collaborations with others, Texas enjoys one of the best-funded highway construction programs in the nation.

## BUILDING AWARD-WINNING COMPANIES

Johnny doesn't just talk the talk—he walks the walk. Shortly after graduating from Texas State University, he founded Hunter Industries in 1983, and Colorado Materials in 1985. Under his leadership, Hunter Industries and Colorado Materials have become award-winning companies with a strong focus on quality and safety. In fact, Hunter Industries has won more TxDOT-TXAPA Quality Asphalt Pavement Awards than any other company in Texas. The



Harold Mullen and Glen Dvorak present Johnny Weisman (center) with the Hall of Fame Honor alongside wife, Nathali Weisman.

excellence of his team extends to the individuals who work for him, with several of his QC/QA technicians having been recognized as Technicians of the Year.

And yet, Weisman's commitment to the industry extends far beyond his own businesses. Despite his demanding schedule, Johnny has always found time to contribute to TXAPA in meaningful ways. He has served as a Board Member and Co-Chair of the Joint Certification Steering Committee, and he has chaired numerous other committees. Under his leadership, many of his team members have also become active within TXAPA, serving as committee members, chairs, board members, and even as TXAPA presidents. Johnny's unwavering support and resources have consistently helped TXAPA achieve its goals.

## A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

Over the years, Johnny has been recognized with numerous awards for his contributions to the industry. His professional affiliations include leadership roles at AGC of Texas, TXAPA, and other state and national organizations that champion the construction and pavement industries. His tireless advocacy for transportation funding and infrastructure improvement has earned him widespread respect and admiration.

## AN INDELIBLE MARK

It is impossible to overstate the respect and admiration Johnny Weisman has earned

from his peers. He has not only built successful companies but has also created lasting, positive changes within the industry. As we honor him with induction into the Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame, we extend our deepest gratitude for everything he has done to elevate our field. □



## NOMINATE AN INDUSTRY HERO TO THE TEXAS ASPHALT PAVEMENT HALL OF FAME

Our industry is built on people and relationships more than any other factor. The Texas Asphalt Pavement Hall of Fame was established to honor those whose noteworthy career achievements are matched only by their integrity and selflessness demonstrated for the betterment of their colleagues and industry. Follow the code to nominate your industry hero for the Hall of Fame Class of 2025.



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# 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA QUALITY ASPHALT PAVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

**T**he 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of individuals, organizations, and projects that exemplify excellence in asphalt paving across Texas. Jointly presented by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA), these awards highlight innovative practices, superior craftsmanship, and collaborative efforts that advance the quality, safety, and longevity of Texas roadways. Each winner embodies the highest industry standards, demonstrating a commitment to delivering infrastructure that supports the state's growing transportation needs. Through these recognitions, TxDOT and TXAPA aim to inspire continued innovation and excellence, setting benchmarks for future projects and promoting best practices throughout the industry.



**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Complexity Paving Division, Specialty Mixes Category: TxDOT Abilene District and R.K. Hall Construction, Ltd. for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Howard County BU 87 project.**

The evaluation process behind the TxDOT-TXAPA Awards is both rigorous and comprehensive, reflecting the high standards of the program. A diverse team of industry and retired TxDOT volunteers meticulously reviews each nominated project. These evaluators bring years of experience and technical expertise to the table, assessing projects based on criteria such as difficulty, appearance, and ride quality. Given the immense size of Texas, with thousands of miles of asphalt pavement spanning urban, rural, and highway settings, the evaluation process requires an extraordinary level of coordination and dedication. Evaluators travel across the state to inspect projects firsthand. Their work plays a crucial role in selecting the winners, recognizing the best of the best.

The TxDOT-TXAPA Awards not only honor the winning projects but also recognize the collaboration between the asphalt contractor, producer, and



TxDOT district responsible for their success. These projects exemplify the teamwork and dedication required to deliver superior paving solutions across the state. In addition to state-level recognition, the winning projects are submitted for the prestigious National Asphalt

Pavement Association (NAPA) awards, where they almost always earn accolades at the national level, further showcasing Texas as a leader in the industry. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in this year's awards program, with special thanks to the

Awards Committee and Chair, Glen Dvorak of Hunter Industries, Ltd., for their tireless efforts in coordinating this important initiative. Your hard work ensures that excellence in asphalt paving continues to be celebrated and promoted throughout the state and beyond. □



**Congratulations to the 2023 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Specialty Mixes Division, Overlay Large Category: TxDOT Houston District, Durwood Greene Construction Co., and American Materials, Inc., for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Brazoria County BU 288-B project.**



**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Overlay Small Category: TxDOT Pharr District, and IOC Company, LLC, for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Hidalgo County FM 2812 project.**





**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Overlay Large Category: TxDOT Waco District, Texas Materials Group, Inc, for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Coryell County IH 14 project.**



**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Overlay Medium Category: TxDOT Austin District, and Lone Star Paving, for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Williamson County SH 29 project.**

**THROUGH THESE RECOGNITIONS, TXDOT AND TXAPA AIM TO INSPIRE CONTINUED INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE, SETTING BENCHMARKS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS AND PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES THROUGHOUT THE INDUSTRY.**





**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Overlay Extra Large Category: TxDOT San Angelo District, and Allen Keller Company for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Kimble County IH 10 project.**



**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Full Depth Small Category: TxDOT San Antonio District, Hunter Industries, Ltd., and Colorado Materials, Ltd., for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Atascosa County FM 2924 project.**

**THESE PROJECTS EXEMPLIFY THE TEAMWORK AND DEDICATION REQUIRED TO  
DELIVER SUPERIOR PAVING SOLUTIONS ACROSS THE STATE.**





**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Full Depth Medium Category: TxDOT Laredo District, Anderson Columbia Co., Inc, for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the La Salle County FM 468 project.**



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**DALLAS**  
MAY 20-21, 2025





**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Specialty Mixes Division, Overlay Small Category: TxDOT Austin District, Texas Materials Group, Inc. for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Williamson County US 183 project.**



**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Overlay Texas Size Category: TxDOT Lubbock District, James Hamilton Construction Co, for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Gains County US 180 project.**

**WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THIS YEAR'S AWARDS PROGRAM, WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE AWARDS COMMITTEE AND CHAIR, GLEN DVORAK OF HUNTER INDUSTRIES, LTD., FOR THEIR TIRELESS EFFORTS IN COORDINATING THIS IMPORTANT INITIATIVE.**





**Congratulations to the 2024 TxDOT-TXAPA Texas Quality Asphalt Pavement Award winners in the Dense Graded Mixes Division, Overlay Large Category: TxDOT Amarillo District, and R.K. Hall Construction, Ltd., for excellence in production, placement, and quality assurance on the Potter County RM 1061 project.**

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# 2024 TECHNICIANS OF THE YEAR

The role of technicians in the asphalt industry cannot be overstated. They are essential to maintaining the high quality of Texas roadways by ensuring that every step in the process—from material selection to testing—is executed with precision. Accurate testing and adherence to quality standards are the cornerstones of delivering durable, long-lasting pavements. These

technicians work closely with agencies like TxDOT through QC/QA programs to guarantee that projects meet rigorous specifications, making them vital partners in achieving excellence in construction. Their contributions not only enhance the performance and longevity of asphalt pavements but also drive innovations and improvements that keep Texas roads safe and efficient for the traveling public.



## JUAN A. REYNA JR., LEVEL 1A TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR

With an impressive 26.5 years of QC/QA experience in inspection and materials testing, Juan Reyna has been a vital member of the TxDOT team since 1997, starting as a Material and Process Inspector Trainee in the Laredo District Office.

After a brief stint on the Camino Colombia Project with Aster Testing Consultants, Juan returned to TxDOT, where he has excelled in the Laredo District materials lab. His dedication and strong work ethic have made him the go-to person for fellow technicians seeking guidance on hot-mix certifications. His supervisor, Luis Castillo, P.E., values Juan's expertise in providing critical input on various projects.

## JUSTIN WAITS, LEVEL 1B TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR

With 15 years of experience in consultant inspection, Justin Waits is a TxDOT Pre-Certified Superintendent known for his unmatched expertise in all phases of roadway construction.

Throughout his career, he has provided top-tier oversight, inspection, and survey support on numerous multi-million dollar paving and bridge projects across eight TxDOT Districts. His commitment to upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity has been a defining feature of his career.

Beyond his technical skills, Justin is a dedicated mentor, sharing his extensive knowledge with the next generation of Hot-Mix Asphalt and Roadway Construction inspectors. His passion for developing future leaders shines through in all he does.

Now with AECOM, Justin plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of inspectors in Texas.



**TRACY RIVERA,  
LEVEL 2 TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR**

Since joining A.L. Helmcamp in 2013, Tracy Rivera has been a cornerstone of the company's success. Starting her journey as a flagger, her dedication and hard work propelled her to the role of QC/QA Manager.

When A.L. Helmcamp began producing hot mix in North Texas in late 2018, Tracy was the entire Quality Department. Since then, she has built the QC/QA Department from the ground up, expanding its reach to four asphalt plants across North and West Texas. Her leadership and vision have transformed the department into a model of consistency and reliability.

Tracy's detail-oriented and collaborative approach sets a high standard for quality management. Her commitment to maintaining excellence across multiple locations shows her expertise and dedication.

Tracy's remarkable contributions have been instrumental in ensuring A.L. Helmcamp's projects meet the highest quality standards, solidifying the company's reputation for excellence in the industry.



**NATHAN BRANDT,  
SOILS & BASE TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR**

With a remarkable 20-year journey in Civil Engineering, Nathan Brandt began his career in 2005 at PSI as a Materials and Geo Lab Technician and Assistant Driller. His dedication and skill quickly set him apart.

Nathan continued to excel at Rock Engineering, where he played a crucial role in the growth of the lab and office operations. For the past seven years, he has been a vital part of Terracon Consultants as the Laboratory Coordinator within the Materials Department, overseeing training and testing for the Soils Lab to ensure every project meets the highest quality standards.

His commitment to excellence shines through in his keen eye for early error detection and focuses on root cause analysis. Nathan continuously optimizes lab processes and enhances testing accuracy, ensuring timely project completion to exact specifications. □





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# DR. JON A. EPPS

## TxDOT-TXAPA QUALITY SEAL COAT AWARDS PROGRAM



### Winner Region 1:

*TxDOT Childress District and Ronald R. Wagner & Co., L.P.*

The 2024 Dr. Jon A. Epps Quality Seal Coat Awards Program, a collaboration between the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association (TXAPA), in partnership with the Associated General Contractors of Texas (AGC) and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), celebrates excellence in seal coat projects across the state. This program recognizes the dedication to quality design, preparation, materials, and application by honoring TxDOT District Seal Coat Specialists, Maintenance, Design, and Inspectors, along with the Contractors, Material Suppliers, and Striping Contractors who bring these projects to life. Below are the 2024 award winners, whose exceptional work ensures safer, more durable roads for Texas communities. □



### Winner Region 2:

*TxDOT Abilene District and Ronald R. Wagner & Co., L.P.*



### Winner Region 3:

*TxDOT Pharr District and Clark Construction of Texas, Inc.*





#### **Winner Region 4:**

*TxDOT Paris District and  
Clark Construction of  
Texas, Inc.*



#### **Winner Region 5:**

*TxDOT Beaumont District  
and Clark Construction of  
Texas, Inc.*



#### **Winner Region 6:**

*TxDOT San Antonio District and Ronald R. Wagner & Co., L.P.*

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# LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS (LNG) TANK REGULATIONS

BY WES SCHWEERS, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST—WESTWARD ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

**L**iquefied natural gas or LNG is natural gas that has been cooled to liquid form at approximately -265° F. LNG tanks are subject to regulations set forth by the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC). The extent of these regulations depends on the volume of the tank that is being proposed and the filings required can be found in Section 14.2040 of the RRC's Regulations for Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas.

Not every plant is going to have the same amenities. For example, many asphalt production plants may not have access to a natural gas pipeline due to their location. Asphalt plants and many industries use machinery and equipment that require high calorific fuels like liquefied natural gas. Additionally, its high density and low volume means that more energy can be stored in less tank space. As a result, LNG tanks are a common sight at asphalt production facilities as well as many other heavy industries.

From a permitting standpoint, commercial LNG tanks can be separated into two categories based upon their volume. If the capacity of the tank is less than 15,540 gallons, the permitting and regulation process is shorter. In fact, there are only two steps required at this volume. These two steps include filling out an LNG Form 2501 which is obtainable from the RRC's website and paying a \$10 fee per tank listed. Additionally, activities involving the LNG tank can commence prior to your submission of Form 2501 if the facility is in compliance with the rules as per Part 3 of Section 14.2040 of the Regulations for Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas by the RRC.

For tanks over 15,540 gallons, the regulations are more complicated. The required forms, LNG Form 2500 and LNG Form 2500A, must be submitted to the AFS (Alternative Fuels Safety) 30 days before the tank's

installation. A plat drawing from the appraisal district is required that identifies the boundaries of your property and the names of all property owners within a 500-foot radius measured from the location of the proposed tank. Additionally, a site plan is required that shows fire protection, information on other LNG containers on the property, the distance from said containers and dispensers to nearby infrastructure, location and information on other fuel containers and dispensers, and any known hazards or sources of ignition. These filings also must be sent to the property owners within 500 feet of the tank. If your facility LNG tanks will be accessed from a public highway by LNG tank trucks, Texas Department of Transportation needs to verify that the

driveway is of proper design to accommodate such trucks. Once the LNG tank is in place, a written notice of completed construction must be submitted and a field inspection by the RRC must be completed. Once these processes have been approved and completed, the LNG tank can be operated.

In short, the process for obtaining a commercial LNG tank for a site depends on the volume of the tank you're looking to put in. Remember that the threshold is 15,540 gallons so a 15,000-gallon tank can be permitted more easily and in a shorter timeframe than a 16,000-gallon tank.

Questions can be directed to my email address at [wschweers@westwardenv.com](mailto:wschweers@westwardenv.com) or by phone at 830-249-8284. □



IMAGE COURTESY OF JIM WARREN



# WOMEN OF ASPHALT

## TEXAS BRANCH MEMBERS ENJOY A CRAPPIE DAY AT THE OFFICE

### REGIONAL MEETING AT RAYBURN COUNTRY RESORT FEATURES GUIDED FISHING AND GOLF

**T**he Women of Asphalt Texas Branch held its third regional meeting of the year from September 23-25 at the beautiful Rayburn Country Resort in Brookeland, Texas. Nestled along the shores of Lake Sam Rayburn, the resort offered a picturesque setting for collaboration, learning, and fun, providing attendees with a refreshing mix of professional and personal development.



IMAGES COURTESY OF WOMEN OF ASPHALT TEXAS BRANCH

A total of 28 branch members traveled from across Texas to participate in the event, which was generously sponsored and organized by Texas Materials and Mustang CAT, with additional support from Performance Equipment Service and SITECH. The meeting began with a welcome networking reception, offering members a chance to reconnect with familiar faces and meet new ones.

The following morning opened with a hearty breakfast, followed by optional outdoor activities, including guided crappie fishing on Lake Sam Rayburn and a scenic round of golf at the resort's course.

That evening, attendees gathered for dinner and the official branch meeting, led by 2025 Vice-Chair Luiza Barros (Texas Materials). The meeting featured a meaningful discussion on how the Texas Branch could enhance its support for members through professional development initiatives and strategies for fostering collaboration within the industry.

The event concluded with a lively beach party mixer, where participants had the opportunity to unwind, network, and reflect on the day's experiences.

Women of Asphalt Texas is a local branch of the national Women of Asphalt organization, dedicated to empowering women in the asphalt industry. To learn more, follow the QR code. □



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# SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

## TxDOT'S FY23 SAFETY REPORT

BY ROBERT GODINA, SAFETY OPERATIONS SECTION DIRECTOR - TxDOT

**F**or TxDOT, safety is all about being present in the moment and maintaining situational awareness. Focus and awareness are essential. Distractions and complacency could lead to incidents & injuries, and when those happen, it's worth asking: *Are you safe, or just lucky?* Relying on luck is a gamble, and as we know, luck eventually runs out. Safety requires a plan—and following through on that plan every time.

### INCIDENT TRENDS: A CLOSER LOOK AT FY23 DATA

TxDOT's fiscal year 2023 safety data reveals both familiar patterns and new challenges. Although the analysis for the most recent fiscal year is still underway, early indications show similar trends. One critical finding is that over half of all recordable vehicle incidents

in FY23 were preventable. Of these, 11% occurred within work zones, highlighting the importance of targeted safety measures in these high-risk areas (see **Fig. 1**).

Employee tenure also plays a significant role in safety outcomes. Nearly one in four preventable vehicle incidents involved employees with less than a year on the job, many of whom

were still wearing "yellow hats," indicating their new-hire status. More concerning is that almost a third of these incidents happened within their first 120 days of being on the job—a period when they are still getting accustomed to safety protocols.

### INJURIES AND LOST TIME: UNCOVERING KEY PATTERNS

TxDOT's injury data highlights the correlation between work zone safety and new employee vulnerability. One in three injuries involved employees with less than one year of tenure, with half of these injuries occurring within the first 90 days. Work zones continue to present a challenge, accounting for nearly 30% of all injuries in FY23. These numbers make it clear that additional safeguards in work zones are necessary to reduce incidents and injuries (see **Fig. 2**).

Lost production time due to on-the-job injuries is another critical concern. More than a

quarter of reported injuries resulted in lost workdays, with an average of 99 lost production days per injury in construction roles. These lost days represent not only financial costs but also operational setbacks that affect overall project timelines and efficiency.

### UNDERSTANDING INJURY CAUSES ACROSS ALL INDUSTRY

The most common injuries reported were strains and sprains, which made up 38% of all injuries. Overexertion injuries were responsible for 29% of cases, while slips, trips, and falls accounted for 23%. Among injury causes across all industry, slips/falls and overexertion led to most workers' compensation claims, underscoring the need for targeted preventive measures (see Fig. 3).

### A PATH FORWARD: BUILDING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

Addressing these safety challenges requires more than just protocols—it demands a cultural shift that begins with recruitment. TxDOT has started incorporating safety language into job postings and the interview process to emphasize the importance of safety from the outset. New employees now receive enhanced safety orientation, and mentorship programs provide ongoing guidance to help them navigate their first months on the job.

Throughout the year, safety observations are conducted to ensure that employees remain focused and committed to safe practices. To maintain engagement, milestones are celebrated through events like the "Hard Hat Celebration," recognizing individual and team achievements. Training is also ongoing, with seasonal awareness campaigns highlighting safety risks during periods when incidents are most likely to occur.

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

TxDOT is also piloting new technologies to improve safety. In six districts, workers are testing RFID detection systems on equipment such as loaders, skid steers, and rotary brooms. These systems are designed to detect personnel, not just objects, and workers wear passive RFID tags embedded in their hard hats. The goal is to create a safer environment around heavy equipment, reducing the risk of injury.

Work zone safety continues to be a priority, with best practices such as the use of

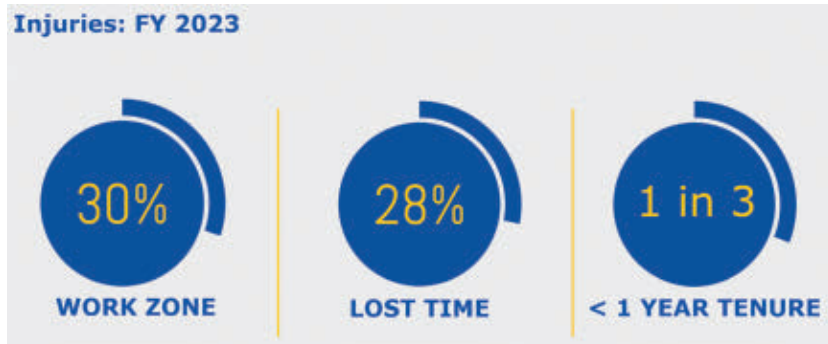


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4uae3ww9>

spotters, staging vehicles according to the 15-50 rule, and avoiding the centerline during operations. Stretch-and-flex routines, performed daily, help reduce strains and sprains, contributing to a safer work environment for all employees.

### LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Building a culture of safety requires buy-in from leadership at all levels. TxDOT emphasizes the importance of leadership through statewide safety committee meetings that bring together district and division leaders, as well as safety officers. Employees look to their leaders for cues, and without visible commitment from the top, safety initiatives lose their impact. At TxDOT, actions speak louder than words—leaders must actively

model safety-first behaviors to inspire the same commitment in their teams.

### CONCLUSION

TxDOT's FY23 data underscores the ongoing need for vigilance, planning, and leadership in fostering a safer work environment. Preventable incidents, injuries among new employees, and lost production time injuries all highlight the areas that require continuous attention. Through mentorship programs, enhanced training, technological innovation, and leadership involvement, TxDOT is striving to move beyond luck and build a culture where safety is the standard. By remaining grounded—focused on the present moment, we can work together to ensure that every plan is executed with precision and every job is completed safely. □

FIGURES 1 & 2 COURTESY OF BILL GATES



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# WE BUILD TEXAS ROADS BRINGING HEAVY HIGHWAY OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS

BY KATIE HORTON, TXAPA

**T**he We Build Texas Roads initiative continues its mission to connect students with career opportunities in the heavy highway construction industry. On October 21, the team participated in a Heavy Highway Pop-Up event at East Central High School, featuring seven interactive booths with 30 exhibitors. This hands-on experience gave students a chance to explore the industry, learn about various career paths, and discover opportunities they might not have previously considered.







We Build Texas Roads Website



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Earlier this month, on October 10, the Workforce Rangers participated in the CIE Foundation's Trades Day at the Humble Civic Center in Houston. Trades Day introduces high school students to careers in construction, engineering, heavy equipment operation, and other skilled trades. These events are vital for raising awareness about rewarding professions in industries essential to infrastructure and economic growth. We look forward to hosting more Heavy Highway Pop-Up events at schools and participating in upcoming Trades Days in Austin, San Antonio, and beyond.

The Workforce Rangers are the grassroots arm of the We Build Texas Roads initiative—a partnership between TxDOT, AGC of Texas, TXAPA, and TACA. This initiative is passionate about raising awareness of the flexible, lucrative, and empowering career paths in the heavy highway construction industry. It aims to inspire the next generation to pursue these opportunities by promoting available jobs and encouraging young people to apply.

If you're interested in becoming a Workforce Ranger, scan the QR code below and fill out the sign-up form. For more information, contact Katie Horton at [khorton@texasasphalt.org](mailto:khorton@texasasphalt.org).



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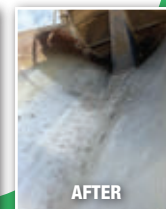
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