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DPS responds to Hurricane Rita

As a monster Category 5 hurricane churned in the Gulf of Mexico and took dead aim at the Texas coast, the State Operations Center at DPS Headquarters activated to the highest level, and DPS Disaster District command posts sprang to life.

“What unfolded was the largest and most extensive DPS response to a disaster in the Department’s history,” said DPS Director Col. **Thomas Davis Jr.** “It was teamwork at its finest.”

Hurricane response plans were implemented, and state and DPS assets were pre-positioned.

Evacuations were ordered along the coast, and citizens clogged Texas highways in unprecedented numbers leaving the Houston area. DPS assisted in implementing the first ever contra-flow in Texas history, turning inbound lanes into Houston into outgoing evacuation routes. Shelters were opened across the state.

On Saturday, Sept. 24, Rita made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 125 miles per hour near the Texas-Louisiana border. The hurricane carved a path of destruction in east Texas,

more on page 4

Commissioner McHugh joins UT System’s Board of Regents

Gov. Rick Perry has appointed DPS Public Safety Commissioner **Colleen McHugh** to the University of Texas System Board of Regents. McHugh, who was the first woman to ever serve on the Public Safety Commission, accepted the appointment last month. McHugh leaves the Public Safety Commission after eight years of service. She was first appointed in 1998 by then-Gov. George W. Bush. She was named chair of the Commission in 2001 by Gov. Rick Perry and was reappointed in 2004 to fill an unexpired term that ran through the end of this year.

Ernest Angelo Jr. of Midland has been appointed chairman of the Public Safety Commission. **Carlos H. Cascos** of Brownsville is the remaining commissioner on the three-member Public Safety Commission. A third member has not yet been named.

DPS online: www.txdps.state.tx.us

DPS “on the air”: 512-424-7777

Dear Fellow Employee,

After last month’s *Chaparral* went to press, we got a little busier than expected. Hurricane Rita kept everyone guessing at first. Forecasters couldn’t be sure where the menacing storm would go ashore, prompting evacuations from Corpus Christi along the coast all the way to Orange. As it turned out, Rita made landfall in the Port Arthur area and then made its way north and east through the Piney Woods, leaving a trail of destruction.

So many DPS employees were involved in—and affected by—the storm and its aftermath that it is impossible to name them all. But know this: You did an outstanding job. Thank you.

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And finally, I want to take a moment to thank Chairman **Colleen McHugh** for her years as a member of the Public Safety Commission. I have greatly appreciated her contributions toward making DPS a better place. Her love and respect for DPS is obvious; we will miss her insight and willingness to serve.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas A. Davis Jr.".

askthecolonel@txdps.state.tx.us

Awards

“Unsung Heroes” recognized

Two DPSers were selected as “Unsung Heroes” by the Texas Public Employees Association. **Kathleen Murphy**, Office of General Counsel Austin, and **Heidi Fischer**, Criminal Intelligence Austin, were honored in an August ceremony. They beat out hundreds of nominees for the awards, which are given in three different categories to active state employees who make a difference.

Murphy was nominated by DPS General Counsel **Mary Ann Courter** for her efforts on behalf of Reilly Elementary, one of our neighbors at the Austin Headquarters complex. She is credited with reinvigorating the DPS Mentor Program, and coordinating unprecedented school supply drives, fund-raisers and parties for the students. Murphy said she accepted the award on behalf of all the DPS employees, whose generosity has helped the students and faculty at Reilly.

Fischer was recognized for her work supervising the Criminal Intelligence Missing Persons Clearinghouse Section and their involvement in the Texas Amber Alert Program. “Her dedicated performance has helped all Texans protect our most important resource—our children,” Asst. Commander **Michael Gougler**, Criminal Intelligence Austin, wrote in his letter supporting her nomination.

Short Shots

Shooter executed

A man convicted of killing a state trooper was put to death 13 years after the murder. Ronald Ray Howard, 32, was executed on Oct. 6 in Huntsville for the shooting death of Tr. **Bill Davidson** in Jackson County. Davidson, 43, was shot after stopping a stolen vehicle and died from his injuries on June 26, 1973. The married father of two had been with the Department for 19 years.

“I’m glad the family finally has closure,” said Region VIII Major **Art Garza**, who was Davidson’s partner at one time. “Justice has prevailed.”

Building “I” update

The renovation of Building “I” is complete and its new tenants are moving in. The former Warehouse space on the east side of Austin Headquarters near Guadalupe Street is now a two-story 29,000-square-foot building. It is the new home to the recently created Regulatory and Licensing Service comprised of Concealed Handgun and Private Security employees. Breath Alcohol Testing, the State Polygraph Board and the Emergency Management training unit and mitigation section are also relocating to the new building.

FBI graduate

Lt. **Mickie Sue Scheffler**, Training Austin, graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia September 16.

Fifty and going strong

The 50th anniversary of the Quarter Century Club meeting and banquet will be held on Friday, April 7, 2006 in Waco at the Knox Hall. Make sure you mark this date on your calendar! This occasion gives each of us who have been associated with the Department for 25 years or longer the opportunity to get together and enjoy fellowship with a group of wonderful people.

If you have any questions, please call Chief **Ray Coffman** at (512) 424-2160 or **Jennifer Hall** at (512) 424-7297.

Thought about the Credit Union recently?

Did you know that all DPS active and retired employees and their family members are eligible for membership in their own credit union?

The Texas DPS Credit Union is



On the mend...

Best wishes for a speedy recovery from line-of-duty injuries go to:

- Tr. **Robert Villafranca**, HP Austin, injured during traffic stop;
- Tr. **Steven Oliver**, HP Denton, shot in leg by a suspect;
- Sgt. **Angel Amoles**, Narcotics Corpus Christi, injured executing search warrant.

Good news! Tr. **Joseph Vogel**, HP Beaumont; Tr. **Wilton White**, HP Hempstead; and Tr. **Rene Cordova**, HP Eagle Pass, have returned to work full-duty.

a 50-year-old not-for-profit financial institution, headquartered in Austin near the main DPS complex. You can take advantage of many financial products and services no matter where you may live—and they want your business.

Call toll free at 1-877-252-9199 and join today! Texas DPS Credit Union is the only financial institution specifically chartered to serve the DPS family. Visit them on the Web at www.txdpacu.org.

Keep in touch with the troops

The Public Information Office is seeking e-mail addresses for our employees who are deployed, so that those of us who remain here in Texas can drop them an encouraging note. If you know of e-mail addresses for any of our employees who are deployed, please send that employee's name and e-mail address to: pio@txdps.state.tx.us. In a later issue, we'll have information on how to participate in this program.

Mile Markers

Promotions

Texas Ranger Division

Antonio Leal, Lt., Rangers Austin to Capt., Rangers Austin; **Henry Lee Whitman**, Sgt., Rangers San Antonio to Lt., Rangers San Antonio; **Skylor Devillier Hearn**, Sgt., Rangers Beaumont to Lt., Rangers Austin.

Director's Staff

Howard Duane Henderson, Lt., Rangers Austin to Inspector II, OAI Austin.

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David Gene Crook, Sgt., Crim. Intel. Svc. Austin to Lt., Crim. Intel. Svc. Hurst; **Kevin David Wright**, Tr. II, HP Webster to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Beaumont; **Justin H. Holdridge**, Tr. III, HP Austin to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Austin; **Jason Alexander Bobo**, Tr. II, HP Waxahachie to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Alpine;

Jeffrey Patrick Ashburn, Tr. II, HP Lubbock to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Alpine; **Gary Lynn Phillips**, Staff Sgt., Gov. Protective Detail Austin to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. McAllen; **Arthur Ryan Koonce**, Tr. II, HP Nacogdoches to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Alpine;

Derek Dwayne Evans, Tr. II, HP Austin to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Del Rio; **Joseph Conte Navarro**, Tr. III, HP Mineral Wells to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. McAllen; **Scott David Rosenberry**, Tr. II, HP Pierce to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. McAllen; **Devin Ray Gonzales**, Tr. II, HP Terrell to Sgt., Narcotics Svc., Laredo;

Larry Shane Cartwright, Cpl. II, HP Weatherford to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Laredo; **Chris Lane Armstrong**, Tr. II, HP Terrell to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Laredo; **Robert Earl Germany, Jr.**, Tr. II, HP Huntsville to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Laredo;

Timothy Ryan Leggett, Tr. II, DL Austin to Sgt., Crim. Intel. Svc. Garland; **Steven Cagle Davis**, Tr. II, HP Amarillo to Sgt., Crim. Intel. Svc. Midland; **Brent Michael Barina**, Cpl. II, HP Freeport to Sgt., Crim. Intel. Svc. El Paso;

Brian Travis Brazil, Sgt., HP Jasper to Sgt., Crim. Intel. Svc. Eagle

DPS "on the air": 512-424-7777

Pass; **Stephen K. Robertson**, Criminalist VII, Crime Lab Austin to Asst. Manger Field Laboratories Austin.

HP

Cody Allen Mitcham, Tr. II, HP Tyler to Sgt., HP Weatherford-North; **Brian Paul Wilson**, Tr. II, HP Stephenville to Sgt., HP Odessa-South.

DL

Willie Lee Kent, Tr. III, DL Houston to Sgt., DL McAllen.

Retirements

Karen A. Saxon, Examiner, DL Anson, 23 yrs., 2 mos., 16 days; **Albre Patricia Cheshire**, Sen. Operator, Comm. Svc., Beaumont, 22 yrs., 9 mos.; **Paul Douglas Whitmire**, Tr., HP Anderson, 3 yrs., 7 mos., 24 days;

Dean Arthur Rimbach, Sr. Tr., DL Houston, 24 yrs., 8 mos., 24 days; **Mary Dixie White**, Clerk IV, HP Houston, 6 yrs., 8 mos., 10 days.

Deaths

Ray Ward, ret. Lt., SES Dallas (Dec. 1958–Aug. 1992) died September 18, 2005; **Jack McNair**, Program Spec., CVE Garland (Aug. 2001–Sep. 2005) died September 22, 2005; **George Anson Rosenkrans**, Lead Mechanic, Staff Support Svc. Austin (April 1990–Sep. 2005) died October 1, 2005.

Jimmie Granato, ret. Lt., Narcotics Svc. Del Rio (June 1974–Jan. 31, 2003) died October 14, 2005; **Hillery Canon**, Admin. Tech., Fleet Austin HQ (Aug. 1959–Dec. 1985) died October 10, 2005.

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HP troopers posed with their cars in front of the Academy Sports store in Beaumont, which graciously opened its doors after the hurricane and let law enforcement officers bunk down in the building.



President George W. Bush visited DPS Headquarters hours after Rita made land-fall. Here, he poses in the SOC with a few of his favorite DPS employees.



**Extreme Make Over:
Office Edition**

The Pasadena Driver License office made it through the storm but could not survive a fire that raged through the shopping center. Employees have been moved to other offices in the area and other options for serving the public are being explored.

continued from page 1

severing electricity, disrupting water and sewage services, damaging homes and businesses. A total of 22 east Texas counties were ultimately declared disaster areas.

DPS personnel were among the first on the ground in the re-entry into affected areas. More than 2,000 DPS personnel from all over the state responded to east Texas, while numerous others at Headquarters performed a variety of functions.

DPS responded to traffic problems and performed damage assessment on the ground and in the air. Department personnel assisted special needs facilities, provided security for shelters and affected areas, protected homes and businesses from looters, and coordinated relief efforts, supplies and repair crews. DPS personnel also responded to damaged DPS facilities.

“So many of our people worked long hours under great stress, often away from their families, and they performed magnificently,” said Col. Davis. “The information gathered in this disaster will be invaluable in preparing Texas to deal with future crises.”

Troopers received fan mail for their efforts before and after the storm. Here are some excerpts:

“To all who work at Texas DPS...We evacuated to Tyler using highways 59 and 69 as our route. Along the way we saw so many of our DPS officers out there doing a magnificent job at an extremely overwhelming task. I don't give a hoot what the media says, I have seen those ladies and gentlemen in action, and no agency in the U.S. could have done any better. The Texas Department of Public Safety is the best in the world...”

“...the DPS troopers were simply amazing... The odds of a safe trip would without a doubt have been much different if DPS and local law enforcement hadn't been so visible. It just felt safer that these men and women were there and doing their best in an impossible situation...Others may complain; but you get nothing but kudos from us. Thank you.”