



Produced by DPS Public Information, (512) 424-2080

July 2008

TexasSure cracks down on insurance violators

Uninsured motorists' free ride is coming to an end. That was the announcement by four state agencies when the first phase of TexasSure, Vehicle Insurance Verification database, was unveiled in early June.

TexasSure is a secure database that matches the records of registered passenger vehicles in Texas to personal auto insurance policy data submitted by 200-plus Texas insurance companies. With such information at their fingertips, law enforcement officers and county tax officials can instantly verify whether a vehicle has auto liability coverage required by state law.



Four state agencies—the Department of Insurance, the Department of Transportation, **DPS** and the Department of Information Resources—have been developing the program over the past several years. Within DPS, the Driver License Division, Highway Patrol and TLETS have all played major roles in launching the program.

County tax assessors across the state are already using the information in a pilot program and DPS troopers in the Austin area are field-testing the database as well.

The DPS field testing will last until August 3. Then, after an assessment period, the database will be made available statewide to all law enforcement agencies through TLETS (Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunication System). No exact date has been announced. Training materials are also being prepared for law enforcement agencies for release before the system goes statewide.

Law enforcement officers will run a vehicle's license plate to access the TexasSure database, and the response will help the officer ascertain whether the vehicle has insurance and officers can take appropriate action.

Will it work? More than 30 other states have some type of auto insurance verification program in place. Each has seen a reduction in the number of uninsured vehicles on the road.

It is important to note that DPS does **not** believe the law allows the database to be used for probable cause in stopping a vehicle. The vehicle

continued on page 4

Dear fellow employee,

The early morning hours of Sunday, June 8, brought dozens of Austin fire trucks and hundreds of firefighters to the Texas Governor's Mansion to fight a blaze that was intentionally set. Unfortunately, the firefighters were unable to save the empty 150-year-old building from the flames.

As I write this, state and federal investigators are searching for the person or persons who started the fire. And we are conducting an internal investigation into the circumstances that allowed the arsonist to penetrate our defenses.



We are still looking for qualified trooper-trainee applicants. If you know anyone who would make an excellent trooper, please have them call Recruiting at 1-866-898-7667.



The July 4 holiday is near. Please be careful, no matter whether you are on patrol or out with your family. Many drivers make poor choices during this holiday and choose to drink and drive. Don't be one of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Thomas A. Davis Jr.'.

Awards

Tr. **Paul Kohleffel**, HP New Caney, received a Director's Citation for his life-saving actions in Montgomery County in 2007. He responded to a single-fatality wreck with eight total vehicles. Kohleffel and two others made sure there wasn't a second fatality by their brave actions. A man was pinned in an 18-wheeler by large metal pipes that had penetrated the cab after the collision. The trooper, with the assistance of a wrecker driver and a sheriff's deputy, entered the cab, which was engulfed in flames and black smoke to rescue the unconscious man, his hair literally on fire.

Tr. **Derek Leitner**, HP New Caney, received a Director's Citation for helping save the life of a suicidal teenage boy in Montgomery County in 2007. Tr. Leitner responded to the call and found a 15-year-old boy in a tree house holding a shotgun to his throat.

Two officers were pointing their guns at the boy, who was shouting at them to kill him. During negotiations, Leitner left cover and worked to gain the boy's trust. Eventually, he convinced the boy to trade his shotgun for a cigarette, and pulled the teen down from the tree, ending the tense standoff.

Teamwork in Karnes County led to two Director's Citations and three Director's Awards for those responsible for saving a 3-year-old girl. In 2007, a small car and 18-wheeler collided in a horrific crash that claimed

the lives of two people, but there was a survivor.

The little girl, who had an obstructed airway and was not responsive, was wedged in between the door, front seat and roof. Assistant Commander **Jose Ortiz**, Narcotics Austin, came upon the scene and assisted by using brute force to pry the roof up far enough to allow Tr. **Steven Bailey**, HP Karnes City, to get his feet into the car. Bailey used his legs to push the driver's seat forward and pushed the door slightly open with his arms, suffering a back strain in the process.

Off-duty Austin firefighter John Green cut the seat belt off the car seat, while Hopkins Haden stabilized the child's head and body while she was removed from the wreckage. Linda Haden, a registered nurse, then provided critical first aid with the assistance of the two men. Thanks to the efforts of the five rescuers, the three-year-old girl survived. Sgt. **Bradley Freeman**, HP San Antonio, nominated Green and the Hadens.

Briefs

Region VI retirees meeting

The Region VI Retirees association meeting will be held on Saturday, September 13 at the Bellmead Community Center located at 3900 Parrish. Gathering and visiting will begin at 10 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. The cost of the meal is \$10 per person. All DPS retirees are invited to attend. The speaker this year is newly appointed DPS Commissioner **Tom Clowe** from Waco. For more information or to make reser-

vations, contact **Charlie J. Morgan** at 254-867-6732 or **Judy Falkner** at 254-799-8963.

Speir Scholarship deadline

Wilson E. Speir Scholarship applications will be accepted through Aug. 15. Students must be classified as full-time criminal justice majors and enrolled in Texas universities. Two scholarships will be awarded for \$500 per semester for up to two semesters.

Applicants should submit resumes and transcripts of completed college work to: Director's Office, c/o DPS, P.O. Box 4087, Austin TX 78773-0110.

Mile Markers

Promotions Rangers

Jimmie Dale Kaelin, Jr., Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Victoria to Sgt., Rangers El Paso; **Shane Allan Staley**, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. San Antonio to Sgt., Rangers Rio Grande City;

Robert W. Matthews, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Laredo to Sgt., Rangers McAllen; **Steven Jesse Rayburn**, Lt., HP Del Rio to Sgt., Rangers Alpine; **Kenneth E. Bond**, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Tyler to Sgt., Rangers Eastland;

William Eric Kasper, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Garland to Sgt., Rangers Garland; **Marquis M. Cantu**, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Austin-HQ to Sgt., Rangers Waco;

CLE

Christopher Vance Brock, Tr. II, HP Longview to Sgt., Narcotics Svc. McAllen.

THP

John Randall Larocque, Lt., MCB Austin-HQ to Capt., MCB Austin-HQ; **Jay Mark Webster**, Sgt., HP Denton to Lt., HP Webster.

Retirements

Katherine Ann Sutherland, Tech., DL Columbus, 30 yrs., 2 mos., 4 days; **John Thomas Cottle, III**, Capt., Narcotics Svc. Austin, 26 yrs., 11 mos., 21 days; **Luis Jorge Flores**, Sen. Tr., DL San Antonio, 26 yrs., 4 mos., 18 days; **Claudia Rae Lutz**, Examiner, DL Jourdanton, 22 yrs., 7 mos., 7 days; **Cheryl Annette**

Jungkind, Operator, HP Hurst, 28 yrs., 11 mos., 7 days; **Reymundo Guerrero**, Sgt., CIS Harlingen, 27 yrs., 4 mos., 17 days; **Jerry Carroll Rogers**, Custodian, HP Texas City, 22 yrs., 2 days; **Michael C. Gougler**, Asst., Comm., CIS Austin-HQ, 21 yrs., 3 mos.;

Peggy Diane Stout, Research Specialist, BIA Austin-HQ, 20 yrs., 10 mos., 23 days; **Barbara Alice Murray**, Tech., HP Decatur, 20 yrs., 10 mos., 18 days; **Harold Jerry Voortman**, Inspector, HP Garland, 7 yrs., 3 mos.; **Glendon Craigen Hunt**, Sen. Tr., CVE Hereford, 28

yrs., 3 mos., 21 days;

Michael Shawn Melson, Sen. Tr., CVE Odessa, 20 yrs., 9 mos., 23 days; **Maritia Jo Priddy**, Coordinator, CRS Ausitn-HQ, 16 yrs., 10 mos., 26 days; **Thomas Matthew McGinnis**, Tr., HP Corsicana, 5 yrs., 1 mo., 29 days; **Michael Carey Jones**, Analyst, EMD Austin-HQ, 8 mos., 17 days.

Deaths

Harvie D. White, ret. Custodian III, HP San Angelo (October 1993 - August 2005) died May 25, 2008.

100 Club of Houston supports families of DPS officers and other state law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty

The 100 Club, a 55 year old Houston based non-profit organization provides financial support to the dependants of peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty in an eighteen county region surrounding Houston.

In 2006, the Club's Board of Directors expanded their line of duty death coverage to include commissioned DPS, Texas Parks & Wildlife, TABC and TDCJ Institutional personnel killed in the line of duty anywhere in the State of Texas.

Sadly, since the expansion of The 100 Club program, the 27,400-member support organization has helped the following families whose loved ones were killed in the line of duty:

Tr. **Eduardo Chavez**, HP McAllen: May 2, 2006

Tr. **Todd Holmes**, HP Gilmer:



March 14, 2007

Game Warden Justin Hurst, El Campo: March 17, 2007

TDCJ Officer Susan Canfield, Huntsville: Sept. 29, 2007

Tr. **James Scott Burns**, HP Linden: April 29, 2008

The 100 Club's Executive Director Rick Hartley says that "The 100 Club provides a \$10,000 gift to the surviving spouse of the slain officer usually within 24 to 48 hours of the tragedy."

When the time is right, Club officials revisit the family and make an assessment of the family's needs. The 100 Club's goal is to eliminate, within reason, the family's debt. Examples of the support from the 100 Club includes paying off mortgages,

vehicle debt, credit card debt and other needs identified during the visit. Also included is funding to provide for the college education of surviving children.

To date, The 100 Club of Houston has provided more than \$12 million in assistance to the families of peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. Additionally, the Club has provided law enforcement, in the 18 county primary coverage area with an additional \$14.5 million in scholarships and life-protecting equipment.



On the mend...

Great news! No one's on the mend (as of June 17). Stay safe!

Hurricanes can form quickly and are unpredictable: be ready

Recent history has demonstrated that first responders, emergency managers and citizens throughout the state need to be on the alert whenever there is a tropical disturbance in the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricanes can spawn tornadoes and inland flooding, killing people and damaging property hundreds of miles away from the area where they made landfall.

Experts with the National Weather Service say coastal residents should be on constant watch because tropical systems can develop very rapidly.

The only hurricane to make landfall in the United States last year did, in fact, strike Texas. Hurricane Humberto formed extremely rapidly right off the Texas coast and spun up from a tropical depression to a full-fledged Category One hurricane

in just 19 hours. Hurricane Humberto crashed into High Island near Galveston on Sept. 15.

Hurricanes are highly unpredictable storms that can change direction and intensity. There is no guarantee they will follow the path predicted by computer models.

Official Hurricane Center Advisory projections for a storm are made with a “cone of error” in mind. Shaped rather like an ice cream cone with the storm’s likeliest path as a line through the center, this is intended to show how far off the path a storm might move.

Weather experts say they are 60 percent confident that a hurricane will remain within the “cone of error” during a particular forecast period.

The further out in time the prediction, the greater the chance of unexpected changes. That’s why

it’s important to be prepared as early as possible.

24-hour predictions: The center of the storm can move 100 miles to the left or right of the projected track over the next 24-hour period.

48-hour predictions: The center of the storm can move 160 miles to the left or right of the projected track over the next two days.

72-hour predictions: The center of the storm can move 230 miles to the left or right of the projected track over the next three days.

Four-day predictions: The center of the storm can move 290 miles to the left or right of the projected track over the next four days.

Five-day predictions: The center of the storm can move 350 miles to the left or right of the projected track over the next five days.

TexasSure insurance program, continued from page 1

would first have to be pulled over for a separate traffic violation.

Also, DPS does not impound vehicles solely for no insurance. Impounding and TexasSure are separate issues. Local agencies may have their own policies.

It also is important to stress that people with insurance need to continue to carry their insurance cards, because the law has not changed.

“This gives law enforcement a new tool to identify uninsured drivers, especially those using fake or expired insurance cards,” said Lt. **Louis Sanchez**, HP Austin.

An estimated one in five vehicles doesn’t have insurance, about 4 mil-

lion Texas drivers choosing not to get insurance on their cars, trucks and SUVs.

Fines are steep, even on the first offense—a maximum fine of up to \$350 and hundreds of dollars more

in court costs and additional fees. Repeat offenders also are subject to a two-year driver license suspension.

Visit www.TexasSure.com, for more information.

