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October 2004

Driver Responsibility letters are in the mail

The Driver Responsibility Program (DRP) will kick off in earnest this month, as the Driver License Division begins notifying approximately 200,000 Texas drivers of their obligations under the new program, contained in Chapter 708 of the Texas Transportation Code.

The new program, providing for surcharges for a variety of offenses, took effect Sept. 1 of last year, and the Department has been working on the required software with the selected vendor, Municipal Service Bureau (MSB). The money collected goes to trauma centers, emergency medical services and the Texas Mobility Fund.

During the months of October and November, about 5,000 letters a day will be sent to drivers notifying them of their financial obligations under the program. These individuals are required to pay a fee to the state to maintain their driving privileges. If they do not contact the vendor within 30 days to make payment or payment arrangements, their driving privileges will be revoked. Their license will remain revoked until the person pays the fees. If revoked, the person is ineligible for an occupational license.

Patrol officers could start seeing license revocations as early as November. The record will read "Revoked ...surcharge due" or "Revoked Def I/A" (default *see Driver Responsibility on page 4*)

Results of DPS mini-survey are in

DPS has participated in the Survey of Organizational Excellence sponsored by UT along with many other state agencies since the early 1990s. The Department's scores have generally improved over time and we generally score at or near the average score of other agencies taking the survey.

However, in reviewing the reports, we did notice a few areas where it looked like some improvement might be needed and wanted to focus on a couple of those areas to see if we could gain some additional information on those subjects.

As a result, we commissioned UT to look at our previous findings and produce a mini-survey that we hoped would provide us with more specific information on the areas of internal communication and favoritism.

The basic data portion of the survey shows a positive picture relative to the makeup of Department personnel answering the survey. It appears to be a representative sample of the Department as far as age, race, years of service, etc; however, there does appear to be an under-representation of DL and THP field service personnel. This is probably due to the exclusive use of the internet for survey responses.

see mini-survey page 4

Dear fellow employee:

On October 4, we'll welcome yet another recruit class to the Training Academy. An estimated 124 recruits will start their DPS careers with a 27-week school.

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Here's a reminder: Oct. 4 is the deadline to register to vote in the November general election. Please take advantage of your rights as a U.S. citizen by exercising your right to vote for the candidates of your choice. If you don't have a blue and white voter registration card, then you must register in order to vote. You can obtain a voter registration application from your voter registrar's office, libraries, most post offices, high schools, or from the secretary of state's office.

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Please be sure to read the article just to the left of this column. It discusses the results of a "mini-survey" performed for us by the University of Texas. The results of these surveys are very important because they help me and other Department supervisors guide the agency. When employees do not respond to these anonymous surveys, we do not receive a complete view of the employee's concerns about the Department. Next time you receive a survey, please take the time to participate. We need your help.

Thomas A. Davis Jr.

Awards

John Douglas Jones of Splendora received a Director's Award after his dramatic rescue of a 4-year-old boy from a burning pickup in Montgomery County. The boy was riding in the pickup with his grandmother when their vehicle broke down on the side of U.S. 59. Jones, a tow-truck driver, responded and noticed an 18-wheeler heading for them as the grandmother was about to get the boy out of the vehicle. When the 18-wheeler hit the pickup, Jones was knocked to the ground and the pickup burst into flames. He recovered quickly, pulling the boy from the truck seconds before it was entirely engulfed in flames. He sustained abrasions to his arms and burns to both hands during the incident and was hospitalized for two days. He was nominated by Cpl. **Kristy Davis**, HP New Caney.

After a man fell asleep behind the wheel of his car in Young County, it would take an act of bravery from a good Samaritan to save his life. His vehicle smashed into a large tree about 300 feet off the roadway and burst into flames, leaving him incapacitated and facing certain death. At that moment, Franklin Samuel (Sam) Brumley of Graham drove by the area and saw what he thought was a grass fire. Brumley quickly grasped the reality of the situation and rushed to the vehicle, patting out flames that had already spread to the driver's pant leg. With great effort and disregard for his own safety, Brumley pulled the man to safety. The DPS honored Brumley with a Director's Award, which was submitted by Tr. **Larry Blanco**, HP Olney.

Two Houston PD employees received Director's Awards for their part in helping solve the 34-year-old

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murder of Texas Ranger **David Maxwell**'s sister. Sgt. Maxwell, Co. A Bay City, talked Houston PD detective Sgt. Jim Ramsey into reopening the 1969 case. Debbie Benningfield, with Houston's fingerprint section, spearheaded a search that found fingerprints and palm prints that had been misfiled in a 1984 case. After several databases were searched, a match was obtained implicating a former inmate. Sgt. Ramsey launched a search and located the suspect, who confessed when he was confronted. He is now serving a life sentence.

Short Shots

Mandatory comp time notice

State law requires that if an employee submits a written request (HR-11) for time off at least 90 days prior to the date accrued state equivalent compensatory time is set to lapse, the supervisor must (1) approve the requested leave time, or (2) provide the employee with an alternate date to use the compensatory time prior to the lapse date. For more information, refer to Chapter 7, 07.06.08, of the General Manual.

Governor's Protective Detail

The THP Division is now accepting applications for sergeant positions on the Governor Protective Detail. All commissioned Department personnel not currently on disciplinary probation and with at least 48 calendar months service as a commissioned Texas peace officer are eligible to apply. Applicants must contact Capt. **Dale L. Avant** at 512-475-4820 for instructions on the application process.

Dive Team members needed

The Dive Recovery Team is tak-

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ing applications for divers. The applicant must be a commissioned officer with the Department and have a basic diving certificate. Applicants must contact Maj. **David Baker** at 512-424-2115 no later than Oct. 19, and they must send their applications through their chain of command to the THP Chief's office. Tryouts are scheduled for Oct. 26.

CVE wins bronze

Sen. Tr. **Rex Walker**, CVE Angleton, represented DPS at the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) 2004 North American Inspectors Championship in August in Salt Lake City, Utah. Walker placed third in the North American Standard Hazardous Materials/Transportation of Dangerous Goods and Cargo Tank/Bulk Package Inspection Category.

This competition is an annual event which brings state troopers and inspectors from around North America to test their knowledge and skills in the enforcement of numerous federal regulations on commercial motor vehicles. This year, 50 CVSA certified state troopers and inspectors from Canada, Mexico and the U.S. participated.

Randall Vetter Honored

The memory of **Randall Vetter** lives on in a new Hays County Park that was dedicated August 18. Vetter was killed in the line of duty August 7, 2000, not far from where the new park is located. The Randall Wade Vetter Park is located between San Marcos and Kyle on the banks of the Blanco River immediately downstream of Dudley Johnson Park (also known as Five Mile Dam) at 3970 South Old Stagecoach Road. Call 512-393-2212 for more info.

askthecolonel@txdps.state.tx.us

Legacy of Heroes

Sgt. **Shawn Younger**, HP Decatur, was honored in a September 11 ceremony for his selection to the Legacy of Heroes calendar. Younger was recognized because of his actions in 2002 when he rescued a man from a burning vehicle while off duty in Wise County. The awards were created to honor and thank law enforcement and emergency personnel.

Tr. **Jeremy Smith**, HP Weatherford, and Cpl. **Shane Cartwright**, HP Weatherford, were among those nominated anonymously by members of the community, fellow officers and family members. Proceeds from the calendar go back to the agencies featured in the calendar to purchase safety-related equipment.

For more information, visit www.911heroes.org.

Did someone say SECC?

It's time for the State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC)! There are more than 200 charitable organizations in the campaign this year. Hurry though, the deadline is Oct. 31.

Last year, our employees pledged or donated more than \$85,547! Congratulations to everyone! If you have any questions about the campaign, or you need to know your local coordinator's contact information, e-mail or call SECC Statewide Coordinator **Beth Warren** at 512-424-5639.

Think Museum when giving

The DPS Museum is again on the list of organizations that the State Em-

ployee Charitable Campaign supports. The museum Board of Trustees wishes to thank all who contributed in the past campaigns and extend a big grateful "thanks" to all who contribute in the future. A special thanks goes to Sgt. **Justin Chrane**, HP Bastrop, and his entire sergeant area for their overwhelming support in the past campaign.

Arts & Crafts Fair

The annual DPS Arts & Crafts Fair is just around the corner. Mark your calendars on Friday, November 5. If you have any questions, contact **Jennifer Hall** at 512-424-7297.

Mile Markers

Promotions

Director's Staff

Jose Pereida Ortiz III, Lt., Narcotics Svc. George West to Insp. II, OAI Austin.

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Walt Anthony Goodson, Sgt., Spec. Crimes Austin to Lt., Spec. Crimes Austin; **Alberto Maldonado**, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. McAllen to Sgt., MVT Corpus Christi; **Guadalupe Ramon**, Tr. II, HP George West to Sgt., MVT Laredo.

Retirements

Randall Joe Flint, Sgt., CVE San Angelo, 30 yrs., 6 mos., 25 days; **David Maury Griffith**, Cmdr., MVT Austin, 30 yrs., 2 mos., 19 days; **Florin Wayne Schaefer**, Manager, IMS Austin, 28 yrs., 10 mos., 15 days;

David Alan O'Neal, Sen. Tr.,

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HP Marshall, 26 yrs., 8 mos., 26 days; **Joe Jacinto Precella**, Jr., Sen. Tr., CVE Nacogdoches, 24 yrs., 7 mos., 22 days; **Scott Thomas Woolery**, Sgt., DL Amarillo, 20 yrs., 7 mos., 20 days; **Johnny Lee Hardeman**, Sen. Tr., DL Port Arthur, 19 yrs., 7 mos., 22 days; **Reynaldo Ruis**, Cust. III, HP Kerrville, 16 yrs.; **Johnny Edward Byrd**, Tr. IV, HP Austin, 14 yrs., 9 mos.; **Jose C. Morales**, Lt., HP Austin, 13 yrs.; **Ruben Cano, Jr.**, Sen. Tr., HP Eagle Pass, 30 yrs., 6 mos., 25 days;

Jesse Thomas Sharp, Lt., HP Laredo, 30 yrs., 6 mos., 25 days; **Michael Lee Bishop**, Sgt., CVE, Mount Pleasant 30 yrs., 2 mos., 19 days; **David Ralph Slaton**, Sen. Cpl., HP Bowie, 30 yrs., 2 mos., 19 days; **Jay Lynn Moses**, Sgt., Spec. Crimes Abilene, 29 yrs., 6 mos., 19 days;

Phillip L. Boerjan, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. Falfurrias, 28 yrs., 10 mos., 2 days; **Dwight Mark Hardin**, Capt., Narcotics Svc. Austin, 27 yrs., 10

mos., 18 days; **James W. Burson Sr.**, Lt., MVT Waco, 26 yrs., 8 mos., 24 days; **Michael Lawrence Hubenak**, Sen. Tr., HP Wharton, 26 yrs., 8 mos., 15 days;

Terry Don Neal, Sen. Tr., HP Abilene, 24 yrs., 2 mos., 9 days; **Vibella A. Seward**, Admin. Asst. II, LI Austin, 21 yrs., 3 mos., 22 days; **Georgiana Handy**, Cust. III, HP Amarillo, 9 yrs., 11 mos., 25 days;

Margaret Lee Ray, Tech., LI Austin, 10 yrs., 9 mos., 13 days; **Robert Francis Standley**, Supv., Crime Lab Austin, 10 yrs., 5 mos., 22 days.

Deaths

Crystal Beth Cranford, Supv., VIR Austin (April 1993 – Aug. 2004) died August 28, 2004; **Clayton McKinney**, ret. Ranger, Co. E Alpine (Sept. 1969 – Aug. 1985) died August 20, 2004; **Laveda "Skeeter" Roper-Cox**, ret. Cpl., Capitol Svc. Austin (Sept. 1991 – June 1999) died July 30, 2004.

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Driver Responsibility Program (point system) in effect, contd. from page 1

of installment agreement). Agencies should arrest the individuals for Driving While License Invalid, a class B misdemeanor.

DRP has two major components: a point system and a conviction surcharge system. The point system is based on the accumulation of class C traffic offenses, while the conviction surcharges are based on a one-time conviction of certain more serious traffic offenses.

The point system authorizes the state to collect \$100 from any individual who amasses six points in a three-year period. An additional \$25 will be assessed for any points more

than six. The fee will be required every year the three-year driver history reflects a minimum of six points. Two points are assessed for each conviction of a designated moving violation. Three points are assessed if the moving violation resulted in a crash. A complete list of moving violations that will be assessed points can be found in Title 37 Part 1 (DPS) Texas Administrative Code §15.89.

Certain moving violations will not be assessed points but will result in an automatic surcharge. The surcharge will be assessed when the conviction is reported to DPS and will then be charged each year for a three-year pe-

riod. Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) convictions as defined in Penal Code 49.09 will result in an annual assessment for three years of \$1,000 for the first conviction, \$2,000 if the court reports an alcohol concentration of .16 or more and \$1,500 for a second conviction within the three-year period.

Convictions for Driving While License is Invalid and Failing to Maintain Financial Responsibility will result in an annual assessment of \$250 for three years. Convictions for No Driver License will result in an annual assessment of \$100 for three years.

Mini-survey results a call to action for managers, contd. from page 1

It is also interesting to note that the responses to the survey for the different groups of employees are very similar (commissioned, non-commissioned and the various divisions). When the items are placed in order based on the average score for each item from high to low, the items that score in the positive, negative and neutral range were ranked similarly across all employee types and groups.

A significant concern DPS management had in the last Survey of Organizational Excellence was the decline in the response rate. The rate has fallen steadily over the years from 44% in 1996 to 20% in 2001. A concentrated effort was made to encourage all employees to participate in the Mini-Survey. As a result, the 2,733 participants in the Mini-Survey were almost double the 1,440 that participated in the 2001 Survey of Organizational Excellence.

The larger response from employees is greatly appreciated, however it still represents less than a third of the agency.

Respondents rated 22 items on a scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The average scores for the items ranged from 2.73 to 3.95

with 3 being neutral. The lowest scoring items were:

- Departments, bureaus, divisions, offices, etc openly share relevant information between each other.

- The interview board process hires the best person for the job.

The highest scoring items were:

- I understand the mission, and vision of the Department and how it relates to what I do.

- My direct supervisor provides timely, complete and accurate information to me.

In addition, there were literally hundreds of pages of comments given by survey participants that were reviewed by both Colonels.

Management is still concerned about the questions that scored in the lower range, but this new survey did not significantly help in locating the sources of the problem areas. A breakdown of the answers for the various items does not show a consensus among employees; nor does it identify any particular group that scores issues more negatively than the rest.

For example, on the item concerning disciplinary actions being administered fairly - the overall average was 2.85, and the breakdown of the re-

sponses were: 12% strongly disagree, 25% disagree, 32% neutral/no answer, 26% agree, 5% strongly agree. This is a typical pattern in the item responses and does not change radically when looking at the various groups of employees (commissioned, non-commissioned and the different divisions).

However, similar items do not necessarily lead to similar results. Here is an example of items that seem to conflict with one another - 60% of the employees indicated that lack of communication was widespread throughout the Department; however, 64% indicated that they are able to get the information needed to do their job and that they were able to get answers to questions about policies and procedures.

Results of the survey will be posted on the DPS intranet in October in the news section.

It is critical that management continue efforts to understand and resolve employee problems and concerns. We know that our employees achieve the results and represent the Department to the citizens we serve. We will continue to look for ways to give employees a supportive work environment that enables them to do their best.