Infrastructure

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF TEXAS

2023
Administrative
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AGC of Texas
PAC Events

TxDOT Shatters
Records with \$142B
Transportation Investment

4 Infrastructure-Related Constitutional Amendments on the November Ballot













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Honoring Our Past, Creating Our Future.

At the unveiling of the recently renovated Chapter Office event in August, I was in a conversation with a group of members where my wife Ellen was joking about how I needed to do something unique in my presidential photo to stand out among the crowd in the wall gallery of past presidents.

As Ellen mentioned a photo of a man with a pipe, Jennifer Woodard walked by and remarked, "Oh, you're talking about Rabbit!"

For those of you who aren't familiar with the photo in question, it is of a man named R.T. Swilling, Jr. who was president of AGC of Texas in 1964 and 1973. After closing his business, Swilling later went on to work for AGC of Texas. Jennifer recounted the group with stories of Rabbit, how he was a large, imposing man and liked to make a show of slamming down his bag on the desk when he entered the office. She described him as "gruff but with a heart of gold."

Sounds like a highway contractor, doesn't it?

In this industry, we've all come across our fair share of characters. I have no doubt we could spend countless hours reminiscing about the antics of individuals who left a last mark on our lives. But, at the end of the day, there are certain defining characteristics of the true greats of our industry.

- Visionary Thinking: They have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and are driven by a sense of purpose that extends beyond personal gain.
- **Resilience:** Great individuals often face adversity and setbacks, but their ability to

bounce back and persevere is what sets them apart.

- **Passion:** They are deeply passionate about their pursuits, which fuels their determination and commitment.
- **Innovation:** They embrace change, challenge the status quo, and are willing to take risks in pursuit of their goals.
- **Empathy:** Great individuals understand and connect with people on a human level, making a positive impact on the lives of others.
- **Leadership:** They lead by example, inspiring others through their actions and words.
- Continuous Learning: They are lifelong learners, constantly seeking knowledge and self-improvement.
- **Legacy Mindset:** They think beyond their own lifetime, striving to create a positive and enduring impact on future generations.

As we approach the centennial anniversary of the founding of AGC of Texas in 2024, I challenge you to think about your own lives, careers, and the legacy you leave. The centennial of this organization that we hold dear should not simply be a celebration of our history but a launching point for the next hundred years and the next generation of industry leaders because, in the end, the legacy of a great individual is not measured solely by their achievements, but by the positive change they bring to the world, leaving a mark that transcends time and continues to inspire others.

Stacey Bryant AGC of Texas President

Leadership & Strategic Planning Go Hand in Hand

As AGC of Texas approaches our centennial anniversary in 2024, we have enlisted immediate-past AGC of America President Bob Lanham to oversee the association's Strategic Planning Committee and efforts.

Leadership and strategic planning are two pillars that support the growth and success of any organization. When combined effectively, they create a powerful synergy that propels an organization forward.

The Role of Leadership in Strategic Planning

Leadership is the driving force behind strategic planning. It involves setting a clear vision, inspiring and motivating others, and making critical decisions that align with the organization's mission. Effective leaders provide the direction and guidance necessary for the strategic planning process to thrive by articulating a compelling vision for the future, utilizing data, experience, and intuition to make critical decisions that affect the organization's strategic direction, and aligning members of the organization with the strategic objectives to ensure everyone understands their role in achieving these objectives.

The Role of Strategic Planning in Leadership

Strategic planning, on the other hand, provides leaders with a structured framework to achieve their shared vision. It involves analyzing internal and external factors, setting clear goals, and developing actionable plans to reach those goals through informed decision-making, goal setting, and resource allocation.

The Synergy Between Leadership and Strategic Planning

The true magic happens when leadership and strategic planning work together seamlessly. This synergy enables organizations to reach their full potential by establishing a shared objective, creating a culture of continuous improvement, accountability and ownership, and mitigating risks by proactively identifying and addressing potential challenges.

Leadership and strategic planning are inseparable partners in the journey toward organizational success. Leadership provides the vision and direction, while strategic planning offers the roadmap and tools to reach that vision. When leaders embrace strategic planning as a fundamental part of their leadership strategy, they create a powerful synergy that propels their organization toward sustainable growth and prosperity.

Under the leadership of Bob Lanham and the direction of the Strategic Planning Committee, AGC of Texas is in an excellent position to address both current and future challenges and make critical decisions to poise our association for a prosperous and impactful future.

gennifer Woodard

Jennifer Woodard Chief Executive Officer AGC of Texas



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Highway Funding a Perpetual Concern for Senate Transportation Chair

Gary Scharrer, AGC of Texas

Long before his election to the Texas Senate, Robert Nichols came up with a clever way to help lawmakers better understand the state's underfunding problem facing highway construction.

Nichols learned that Texas only had enough money to fund one out of every three necessary highway projects soon after joining the Texas Transportation Commission in 1997. Nichols has an engineering degree and owns scores of patents. His mind went to work. He created business cards 1/3rd the size of a normal card. He routinely handed out the miniature cards to Texas legislators to help make a point about the state's highway funding shortage.

Former Nichols Senate staffer, Steven Albright, now AGC of Texas' Legislative Director, held up one of those tiny business cards while the senator shared his story with AGC members (before a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 15).

"That was my lead-in," Nichols recalled.

The former businessman and Jacksonville mayor was first elected to the Texas Senate in 2006. His expertise on transportation issues earned him the chairmanship of the Senate Transportation Committee in 2013.

Acknowledging retired AGC of Texas Executive Vice President Tom Johnson, Nichols recalled how Johnson helped navigate the political world after Nichols joined the state senate. He credited Johnson's institutional knowledge; his relationships with legislators and his understanding of how best to use "chips" to accomplish legislative and highway funding goals.

"He was one of my big sounding boards and cheerleader at the same time," Nichols said of Johnson. "Since he retired, I still keep up with him. We go out and have a burger every once in a while, which I appreciate."

Nichols elevated his concern for highway funding about the time he became Senate Committee Chair a decade ago. He illustrated that concern by charting the annual amount of transportation revenue versus the cost of simply maintaining and preserving the existing system. The parallel lines were nearly sitting on top of each other – but the line showing revenue was not adjusted for lost purchasing power.

He showed the graph to an official of the Texas Transportation Institute.

"I said 'as long as there's revenue above this line, we've got the cost of maintaining and preserving, but when the line crosses - we not only will not have enough money to build anything new, but we

cannot even take care of what we got."

Texas Transportation Institute leaders ran the numbers and confirmed Nichols' projection that the lines had already crossed. State leaders took small steps to address the shortage. Changing the point of collection netted about \$300 million a year, Nichols said. Creating the Texas Mobility Fund added another \$100 million a year. The ability to build toll roads starting in 2001 meant \$45 billion worth of toll roads over 15 years until "toll road fatigue" settled in for Texans. Prop 12 followed by Prop 14 allowed more debt – some \$24 billion worth (not counting toll roads), Nichols said.

"And that's a lot of debt. We're still paying a billion dollars a year in debt," the veteran legislator noted.

Nichols routinely praises AGC of Texas members for their involvement in the political arena and for staunch industry advocacy.

"I can't emphasize enough the importance of y'all working as a collective," Nichols said, pointing out the importance of members and staff providing research data and information to help inform lawmakers.

"It's a big deal. I know I can call, and I can get help. It's very important to have somebody over there (at the capitol) communicating," Nichols said.

The state's highway funding significantly improved with the Prop 1 and Prop 7 ballot measures that voters approved in 2014 and 2015 with landslide support. Those ballot issues have increased annual highway funding by billions of dollars.

"So we've gone from the problem of how we're going to pay for our roads, to now how we're going to speed up the big ship," Nichols said.

TxDOT is challenged to get more highway projects ready for letting.

The auto industry's eventual transition from fuel-powered engines to electric vehicles also will impact highway funding as gas tax revenue steadily declines. After multiple tries, Texas legislators approved legislation this year that will assess a \$400 fee on new electric vehicle purchases followed by annual \$200 renewal fees. It marked the first major legislative attempt to generate highway revenue since then Governor Ann Richards signed a 5-cent-a-gallon tax increase in 1991.

It takes AGC members to keep talking to state lawmakers about important issues, and to get to know them. Nichols said: "If you don't have their cell phone number, you don't know them real well." Nichols said he also appreciates AGC of Texas because members police themselves to prevent "cheating or someone manipulating the market,"

"You've got an industry here that watches out for itself," Nichols said. "I see nothing but good things."

Senator Nichols PAC Fundraiser & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



THE 1924 CLUB



The 1924 Club: Where "Members Helping Members" Meets "Advocacy Helping Industry"

The 1924 Club provides a space for members to make an annual contribution to the AGC of Texas PAC and receive access to exclusive advocacy updates and opportunities to engage with legislators and statewide officials on behalf of AGC of Texas.

Annual contributions to the 1924 Club must be made with personal funds in the amount of \$1,200 annually or \$600 annually for AGC of Texas members who qualify as an FLC member (2-10 years into their career or under 40 years of age).

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Four Infrastructure-Related Constitutional Amendments on the November Ballot

Steven Albright, AGC of Texas

At the beginning of the 88th Legislative Session in January 2023, Comptroller Glen Hegar announced that the legislature would have a record-breaking surplus available for the fiscal biennial budget. Following this significant announcement Lt. Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan and other legislative leaders began writing a budget that included historic investments in critical infrastructure. Significant investments in water infrastructure, roads, electric generation, broadband, and parks were all included in the budget. AGC of Texas was very supportive of these efforts. However, some of these initiatives require voter approval.

This November, with the approval of four constitutional amendments, Texans will have an opportunity to make this historic investment in critical infrastructure a reality.

Proposition 6: "The constitutional amendment creating the Texas Water Fund to assist in financing water projects in this state."

 Approval of this amendment will create the Texas Water Fund and allocate \$1 billion to fix aging and deteriorating water systems as well as develop new water supplies for our state. The current state 50 year water plan has a price tag of over \$80 billion. Proposition 6 will help address some of those needs.

Proposition 7: "The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the Texas Energy Fund to support the construction, maintenance, modernization, and operation of electric generating facilities."

Approval of this amendment will establish the Texas Energy Fund administered by the Public Utility
Commission of Texas. Upon approval, \$5 billion would be allocated to the Texas Energy Fund and
could be used to provide loans and grants to finance the construction of electric generating facilities
necessary to ensure the reliability or adequacy of Texas' electric power grid.

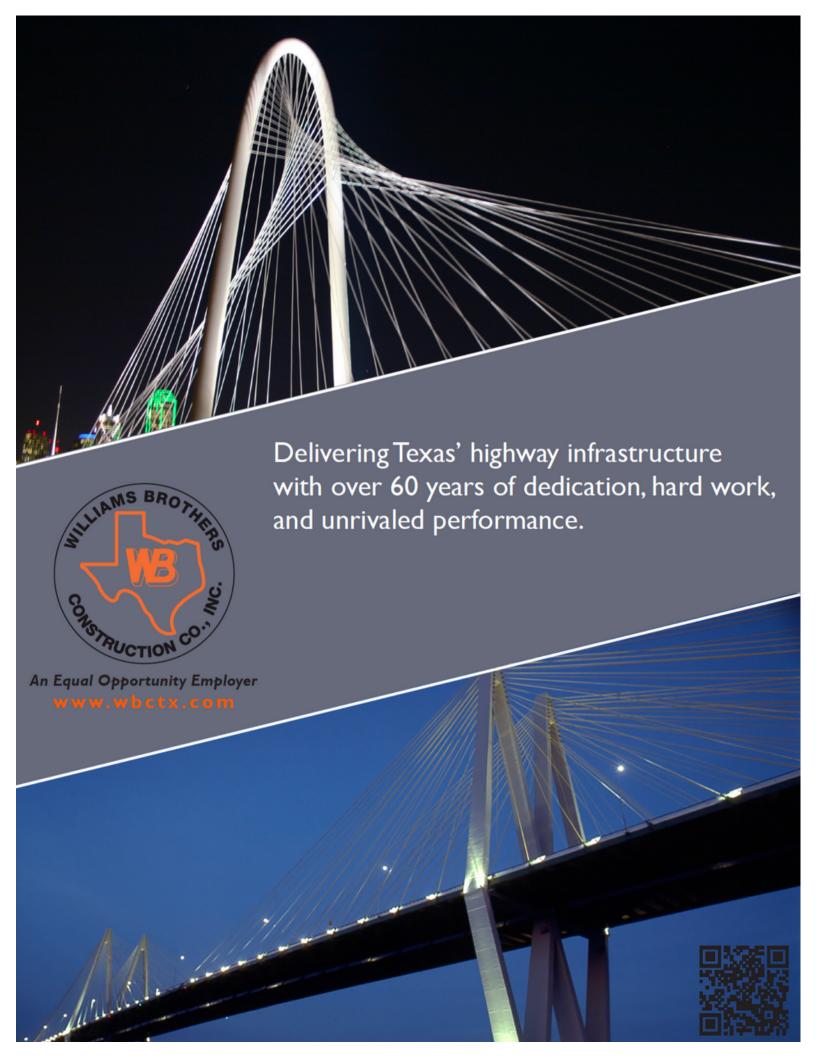
Proposition 8: "The constitutional amendment creating the Broadband Infrastructure Fund to expand high-speed broadband access and assist in the financing of connectivity projects."

• Approval of this amendment would create the Broadband Infrastructure Fund and allocate appropriately \$1 billion to the fund. Combined with more than \$3 billion in federal broadband funding recently awarded to Texas, the Broadband Infrastructure Fund will be used for the expansion of access to and adoption of broadband and telecommunications services across the state.

Proposition 14: "The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the Centennial Parks Conservation fund to be used for the creation and improvement of state parks."

• Approval of this amendment would create the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund and allocate \$1 billion for the creation and improvement of state parks. 2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Texas State Park System.

Early voting for these important constitutional amendments begins on October 23 and election day is November 7. I encourage all AGC of Texas members to support these important investments in our state's infrastructure.



Administrative Conference | July 20-22, 2023



At this year's Administrative Conference, more than 300 attendees gathered at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa for three days of speakers, panel discussions, network opportunities, and social events.

Day 1 kicked off with a Fiesta-themed Welcome Night Reception featuring Lotteria, paper flower crown making, sombrero toss games, and a paleta cart.

On Day 2, attendees received an update on the State of the Chapter from AGC of Texas President Stacey Bryant and heard presentations from AGC of America, Texas State Technical College, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, as well as legislative session panels featuring Rep. Keith Bell, Rep. Jay Dean, Rep. John Lujan, and Jep. Jared Patterson.

On Day 3, attendees heard from TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams, Deputy Directors Brian Barth and Brandye Hendrickson, Director of Engineering & Safety Jessica Butler, Construction Division Transportation Specialist Melissa Daniels, Director of the Civil Rights Division Michael Bryant, and a District Engineer Panel moderated by Chief Engineer Lance Simons and featuring District Engineers Ceason Clemens (Dallas), Epi Gonzalez (Laredo), Blair Johnson (Amarillo), Eric Lykins (Odessa), and Rebecca Wells (Atlanta).







2023 TRANSPORTATION SHORT COURSE HOWDY RECEPTION

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Doug Pitcock '49 Texas A&M Hotel & Conference Center 177 Joe Routt Blvd, College Station | Century Ballroom, 1st Floor

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TxDOT attendees may pay a \$5 fee for hor d'oeuvres at the event
or in advance http://bit.ly/howdyreception

Parking is available at the Cain Garage



















How Our Educational Institutions are Contributing to Construction Workforce Shortages

Steven Sandherr, AGC of America CEO

Each year, the Associated General Contractors of America and Autodesk partner to measure the state of construction workforce shortages, better understand why those shortages exist, assess the impacts of labor shortages on construction projects and learn what firms are doing to cope with and overcome those shortages.

The results of this year's Workforce Survey highlight significant shortcomings in the nation's approach to preparing workers for careers in construction. Among firms with openings, 92 percent of respondents from Texas are having trouble filling at least some of those positions – particularly among the craft workforce that performs the bulk of the onsite construction work.

One of the main reasons labor shortages are so severe in the construction industry is that most job candidates are not qualified to work in the industry. A shocking 70 percent of firms in Texas report applicants lack the skills needed to work in construction. That is even higher than the national average of 68 percent. In addition, 35 percent of firms in the state report candidates cannot pass a drug test.

Many construction firms are taking steps to cope with and try to overcome workforce shortages. Eighty-six percent of Texas firms have raised base pay rates for their workers during the past year. In addition, 44 percent are providing incentives and bonuses and 22 percent have also improved their benefits packages, all higher than the national averages.

Firms are also getting more creative when it comes to recruiting workers. Sixty-four percent of survey respondents in Texas report they added online strategies, like using social media or targeted digital advertising, to connect better with younger applicants. Forty-nine percent of Texas firms are boosting spending on training and professional development programs and 30 percent are enhancing their online and video training capabilities.

Beyond the fact it remains hard for firms to find workers, the biggest takeaway from this year's Workforce Survey is how much the nation is failing to prepare future workers for high-paying careers in fields like construction. Too often, the applicants who are available lack even the basic qualifications needed to be employable.

It is time for the nation to rethink the way we educate and prepare workers. In virtually every community in this country there are open construction positions that pay better than the average job and are vital to local economic growth. Yet too few schools offer classes in construction.

AGC of America will continue pushing federal officials to narrow an education funding gap that currently invests five times as much in encouraging students to enroll in college as it does in preparing them for careers in craft fields like construction. This includes boosting funding for the

Perkins Act as well as rethinking who can qualify for programs like Pell Grants.

We also need to appreciate that it took decades to dismantle our once robust vocational education programs and it will take years to rebuild them. In the meantime, federal lawmakers need to allow more people with construction skills to lawfully enter the country and work in the sector.

The bottom line is we need to do a better job as a nation preparing future workers for the many high-paying career opportunities that exist in this industry. That is why AGC of America and chapters like the AGC of Texas will continue pushing policymakers to do just that.

Phone: 1-866-629-3627





TxDOT Shatters Records with

\$142 Billion Transportation Investment

Lance Simmons, TXDOT Chief Engineer

We're busier than ever at TxDOT as we break ground on new projects and break records for transportation investment. In mid-August, TxDOT announced an unprecedented \$142 billion in total investment for Texas' transportation infrastructure over the next 10 years — a \$25 billion increase in total investment from the previous year.

The record investment includes the unanimous adoption of the \$100 billion 10-year Unified Transportation Program, or UTP. The 2024 UTP shows our commitment to Texas infrastructure now and in the future and will fund the development and construction of more than 9,000 transportation projects across Texas.

This massive investment in our infrastructure means more jobs and more economic opportunity. With upwards of \$10 billion of average annual investment programmed in the UTP over the next 10 years is expected to bring an estimated \$18.8 billion per year in economic benefits, according to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. These benefits are a result of increased labor income and business output, as well as the addition of 70,500 direct and indirect jobs.

Safety is always our top priority and we're investing nearly \$17 billion for safety over the next 10 years. We're also putting \$6 billion in funding toward our Texas Clear Lanes program to help ease congestion in our major metro areas. To keep every part of Texas connected, we're making an unprecedented \$19.2 billion in rural investment — a major jump from \$2.2 billion in the 2016 UTP.

TxDOT's record UTP was achieved with funding from Proposition 1 (generated from oil and gas production and severance tax revenues) and Proposition 7 (generated from sales and use taxes, motor vehicle sales, and rental tax revenues). Thanks to legislation that provides an eight-year extension for Proposition 1 and a 10-year extension for Proposition 7, we can continue to rely on these funding sources for many years to come.

The historic UTP came at the end of another record-setting fiscal year. In Fiscal Year 2023, which ended Aug. 31, we shattered previous records with more than \$12 billion in construction and maintenance contract awards. And we're executing and delivering projects at record levels with contractor payments at an all-time high showing we're getting the work done out in the field.

TxDOT's ability to break new records through our UTP, letting and project delivery wouldn't be possible without the work of partners like AGC of Texas. Thanks for your continued partnership as we work together to improve transportation in every corner of the state.

Test Your TxDOT Knowledge

Earlier this year, Texas Department of Transportation Director of Project Development Mo Bur spoke to AGC of Texas members and provided an overview of the Department. Mo delivered a number of data points to the members at the luncheon and we thought it would be fun to provide those data points as a quiz to test your TxDOT knowledge.

TxDOT Highlights:
1. There are TxDOT districts across the state.
2. TxDOT manages centerline miles of highways — more roadway than any other state.
3. TxDOT manages more than miles of public roads, more than any other state.
 The total annual vehicle miles traveled on all roadways throughout the state exceeds miles.
5. TxDOT manages more than bridges — about more bridges than any other state in the nation. Texas is one of the top states in the nation with overall bridge quality.
6. TxDOT manages more than miles of rail throughout the state, ranking #1 by mileage
nationally.
7. Texas ranks first in the nation for waterborne commerce, moving more than million
tons of cargo in 2020.
Growth and Challenges:
8. Between 2010 and 2020, million people were added to the Texas population. By 2050,
Texas is expected to grow to more than million residents (as compared to 30 million
residents today).
9. In fact, between 2021 and 2022, an average of new Texans were added to the state population each day.
10. In the past year, TxDOT's highway cost index grew by over percent.
2024 UTP:
11. The record-setting billion UTP was an increase of billion over the 2023 UPT — which was also a historic amount.
Project Delivery/Rack 'Em and Stack 'Em:
12. In FY 2022, TxDOT had its largest award of contracts ever with about billion in new
highway improvement contracts — double the amount of contract awards just 8 years ago.
13. TxDOT currently has in roadway construction and maintenance projects — another historic number.
How'd you do? Check your answers below.

1.25 2, 80,000 3, 300,000 4, 260 billion 5, 55,000, 28,000 6, 10,000 7, 607 8, 4, 40 9, 1,290 10.55 2, 80,000 9, 300,000 4, 260 billion 5, 55,000, 28,000 6, 10,000 7, 607 8, 4, 40 9, 1,290

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Andrews Myers has always provided us with outstanding legal services, and we've been grateful for their counsel on construction contract negotiations, workforce issues, corporate compliance matters, and when necessary, dispute resolution. They know our industry well. **J

Chris Boutwell

President, Barricades Unlimited





Shortly after 5:00 p.m. on a hot summer evening in the small town of Perryton near the Texas/Oklahoma state line, an EF3 tornado touched down for a devastating eleven minutes.

The tornado touched down northwest of Perryton, crossed Highway 143, and entered town where it killed an eleven-year-old boy and caused significant damage to a mobile home community. The tornado continued into downtown and caused structural damage to several businesses before continuing southeast and damaging numerous mobile and single-family homes.

The tornado then hit an industrial park where it tossed several empty fuel tanks across Texas 143 Loop, crossed into a field where it damaged a grain bin and downed multiple power poles along Highway 377, folded a microwave tower in half, and downed a cell phone tower which caused telecommunication outages.

The tornado crossed Highway 377 and lifted in an open field at 5:17 p.m.

In just 11 minutes, the EF3 tornado killed three people and injured more than 100.

Less than a week after the Perryton tornado, the town of Matador, a small town of 800 near Lubbock, was hit by a tornado around 8:00 p.m.

The tornado in Matador killed four, injured nine, and leveled homes and businesses. A substation was also destroyed in the tornado which knocked out electricity for the entire community.

In the aftermath, AGC of Texas members were quick to offer their assistance in the clean-up efforts.

TxDOT Childress District Engineer Darwin Lankford thanked AGC of Texas members for their assistance and included a note of gratitude from the Matador Supervisor:

"They say home is where your heart is. My heart and home are in Matador. There aren't enough words to express my gratitude. From the moment this happened, I felt the love and support from you all. I appreciate everyone that took the time to come and help us clean up, called, texted, and emailed. The support that has and is being given to us in Matador has meant so much. Thank you doesn't seem like enough, but man, I am so thankful for each and every one of you."

The Department extended special thanks to AGC of Texas member companies Gilvin-Terril, Ltd., J. Lee Milligan, Inc., R.K. Hall, LLC, and Webber, LLC for their assistance in the clean-up efforts in Perryton.





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