

# The Connector

Connecting Dallas County Public Works with its Utility Partners

## Our Mission

To improve the quality of life of our customers by effectively delivering transportation projects, supporting County Road & Bridge Districts, and providing property management services.

## Essentials of Partnering

Trust  
Commitment  
Shared vision

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## Moving Forward, Matrix Management, and Mentoring

*“There is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.”*

*Morpheus (The Matrix - 1999)*

Since 1999 Public Works has been embarking on a Path of identifying itself as a Project Delivery Team. Also during this journey, the term “Matrix” has been utilized as defining this teamwork engine. For Public Works, we define our Matrix teams as working across divisional, functional units in order to achieve project specific objectives. In Public Works, we have four functional divisions – Program Management and Engineering (PEMD) led by Jonathan Toffer; Transportation Planning (T&P) led by Tushar Solanki, PE; Engineering and Construction (E&C) led by John Mears, PE; and Property Management and Utility Services (PMUC) led by Les St. John, PE. All of these divisions serve under their functions to provide expertise in their aligned areas for project delivery.

This year for our strategic path, the objectives for Public Works will be to focus on **Moving Forward, Matrix Management and Mentoring** for our staff and the next generation. In order to review these objectives each division has framed articles that give directions for these paths. PEMD gives overviews and highlights leadership initiatives such as the role of



**Alberta Blair, P. E., Director  
Dallas County Public Works**

digitization for this department. Additionally, E&C addresses approaches that will be taken throughout this year for the big move from our current location to the Records Building. Also mentioned is how staff and teams will be encouraged to work together in order to move in a direction to maintain operations in this transition period.

PMUC gives us a reflection of teamwork history within their division, showing that being on a Matrix team is hard work! In addition, T&P gives feedback from the next generation of Engineers, Planners and professionals by highlighting articles

from some of our interns. Additionally, we are excited about Minesha Reese, Transportation Planner, being selected into the inaugural class of the Dallas County Leadership and Management Academy.

Public Works has many endeavors such as our utility coordination and collaborations which is built upon our partnering principles of Trust, Commitment, and Shared Vision. Through partnering, many of the utility groups have joined our Matrix Teams to deliver projects such as Spring Valley Road in Richardson, which is highlighted as well in this newsletter.

As we turn the corner to 2020, we are excited and looking forward in our journey to potentially becoming an American Public Works accredited agency. We are also embarking on our 7<sup>th</sup> Call for Projects selections to further enhance mobility for this region. Working towards Moving Forward, Developing Strong Matrix Teams as well as Mentoring the Next Generation is an exciting PATH to journey!

The Program Engineering and Management Division (PEMD) coordinates the financial, administrative and pro-

## PEMD Providing Departmental Leadership/Coordination Moving Mentoring and Matrix

gram engineering management activities of the Department of Public Works. PEMD goal is to encourage efficiency and ensure control of our expanding program activities. Roles in coordinating the department's diverse work load range from fiscal management, systems engineering, basic administration, to stakeholder outreach. Programs like our growing Major Capital Improvement Program and the recent 7<sup>th</sup> Call for Projects demonstrate the ongoing need for the fiscal, technical, administrative and outreach capabilities of PEMD. In the upcoming year, the Department's focus on **moving, mentoring and matrix** will provide great opportunities for the division to shine.

**The upcoming move from our current Administration Building to the soon to be remodeled Records Building facility will be an exciting challenge for the department.** We are currently assessing, planning and preparing for the needed information and equipment to be moved. Efficiency will be important for this to be done effectively so we can ensure our project staff has the needed information and tools to make the move as seamless as possible. PEMD is taking a lead role in digitizing the department's records and project materials so we can minimize that amount of paper that needs to be moved and maximize the efficient and effective digital access of critical engineering, fiscal and administrative information for the department.



Jonathan Toffer  
Assistant Director  
Project Engineering and  
Management Division  
(PEMD)

**Public Works has a long standing commitment to mentoring staff and encouraging professional development.** This stems from our recognition of today's success being made possible by the leadership that came before. PEMD is committed to the DCPW mission of planning for the future

and investing in people. Our effort includes a variety of activities furthering professional development. Internship opportunities, staff development, and partnerships with local universities are just some of the examples. These opportunities provide both educational and networking opportunities for the participants.

Additionally, PEMD has provided a variety of live and on-demand learning opportunities this year for departmental staff on surveying techniques, legislative updates, and environmental clearance. In this way PEMD helps professional staff with continuing education required for their specific certifications. PEMD also continues its partnership with the Texas Local Technical Assistance Program (TxLTAP), managed by the University of Texas Arlington's Public Works Institute. This year this partnership facilitated motor grader operation, work zone safety, and flagger training. We are enthusiastic to continue developing personnel to help us be better prepared for the future. We are especially proud of our internship experience. The enthusiasm of the interns is infectious and offers a chance for the staff working with them to reflect on the "big picture" of their individual professional goals and departmental vision. Several high school, undergraduate, and graduate students have had the chance to work as volunteers in the department. (See articles provided by our interns this year) This trade off of temporary help for the department and great experience for the student is truly a win-win situation we look forward to every year.

**The use of diverse matrix teams to attack priority projects is an important tool for DCPW.** These teams are also an important way PEMD does its work for the department. Besides

making sure the organizational procedural coordination of PEMD is brought to bear on important projects, these matrix teams also ensure that adequate staffing and expertise to do a job is available. The diversity of knowledge and backgrounds is an asset to the department's objective. Important examples of PEMD matrix team participation include the APWA Agency Accreditation self-assessment effort currently underway and the evaluation of proposals received from the MCIP 7<sup>th</sup> Call for Projects. PEMD staff participates in these matrix teams, providing expertise in fiscal management and coordination with other partnering agencies. Both of these examples show how objectives can be spread out among team members to prevent overwhelming any single individual and how different perspectives and experience levels can benefit a project. These examples demonstrate the important coordination role of PEMD in the department. Working with our partner governments and other divisions of Public Works, PEMD remains committed to **Moving Mentoring and Matrix** in the upcoming year. For more information, please contact Jonathan Toffer at [jonathan.toffer@dallascounty.org](mailto:jonathan.toffer@dallascounty.org).



## Engineering & Construction: On the Move

Somewhere in the midst of delivering projects, APWA accreditation, the MCIP 7<sup>th</sup> Call for Projects, and many other obligations, Public Works will have to prepare for a move to the renovated Dallas County Records Building around 2021. At the same time, County Clerk John Warren has issued a mandate for a County-wide digitization of documents at least in part due to the move because there will be less space available for everything including hard copy files. The Engineering & Construction Division will approach both the move and digitization in conjunction with each other in order to accomplish what we have to do for both.

As discussed in the annual Public Works Strategic Meeting, E&C will be performing an inventory of both personal and Division files, reference material, equipment, supplies, storage, etc., to determine what we have and how it can be streamlined in preparation for the office move. The inventory will include shared items that E&C utilizes such as central files. This inventory will also be mapped on a floor plan layout to show how much area is being used for the various items. Some of this work has been accomplished to date.

An initial one-day Public Works event called TRAF (Trash, Refer, Assign, File) in the Fall will be utilized to review the E&C items noted above and determine which can be digitized, stored, and/or discarded (in part or entirety). We will seek consensus for actions on shared items with other Divisions of Public Works. A general plan will be developed before the TRAF event and updated in more detail later to determine how remaining E&C items will be moved to the new office and to which location. Additional TRAF's may be required to properly implement the plan. It is important to remember that function and production should not be sacrificed during this process.

While digitization will help to reduce hard copies and files it will not and should not eliminate them completely. After it is determined what and how items can be digitized it is then that some paper, files, plans, etc., can be trashed, while others are sent to archive or remain in the office files of Public Works, particularly for active projects. In the central files, for example, a project that originally had numerous folders for the different categories could be reduced to just one or two folders of items that need to be maintained. The review of all files should include the input of a Project Manager, Contract Administrator, and possibly an Assistant District Attorney. After a project is completed, those remaining files would then be stored or retained as needed.

We believe once the digitization has been substantially implemented, training will need to be conducted for the entire staff to go over what has been done and how the information stored electronically can be retrieved. It is recommended that a complete hard copy index of digitized material produced along with instructions to be distributed to those who may need it.

Also in the Strategic Meeting, we introduced the concept of "Living the TRAF Lifestyle" which means maintaining offices and work areas in a manner that makes them as efficient as possible, organized, uncluttered, functional, ergonomic, and professional, in a continuous manner without having to wait for a designated day to clean things up.

"Living the TRAF Lifestyle" will be critical to both preparing for the upcoming move and maintaining a quality work environment in the new office.

E&C conducted an evaluation of existing individual work spaces in Public Works to recognize those who were "Living the TRAF Lifestyle" and why. The best work areas meet the criteria above and would be most acceptable for visits from Commissioners, staff, or others. These same areas would also be the easiest to move and adapt to the new spaces in the Records Building. It is estimated that equivalent work spaces and areas could be reduced by half in the new office.



John Mears, P.E.  
Assistant Director  
Engineering and Construction Division (E&C)

In an Olympic style ceremony at the Strategic Meeting, E&C noted those who were considered for the top work spaces and then recognized the following winners:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Minesha Reese
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Yohannes Okubay
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Melody Davis

Hopefully everyone in Public Works will grasp the TRAF concept and attempt to improve the current office over the next year because you never know when there might be another **competition**.





## PMUC Matrix Team Folklore Stories

**People shot on sidewalks, hotel turned jail, old time appraiser vs. young whipper snapper appraiser** – these are just a few of the folklore stories emanating from Dallas County Public Works “Property Management and Utility Coordination (PMUC)” Division. Each of these stories illustrates the “flexibility” factor that PMUC emulates through Matrix Teamwork. As defined by Public Works, Matrix Teams are composed of two or more separate divisions of Public Works and/or other Dallas County Departments. PMUC is a servant member on many of these Matrix Teams. The following stories illustrate the versatility of PMUC’s input as a team member:



Matrix Team: DA’s office and PMUC. Background, a fellow was shot on a sidewalk. The shooter is claiming the sidewalk is on private property. PMUC researched County Records and discovered the sidewalk to be within the right of way based on the subdivision’s original plat dated 1890.



Matrix Team: Dallas County Facilities and PMUC. PMUC performed the appraisal for the County’s purchase of the old Cabana Motel located along Stemmons Freeway. The motel was turned into a County Jail. Of interest, in its heyday, the Cabana Motel was host to the Beatles when they came to town. Also, Raquel Welch was a cocktail waitress there. Today, the facilities have been sold back to private developers who are renovating/reviving the historic motel.



Matrix Team: DA’s office, Facilities and PMUC. Background, Dallas County was in the process of obtaining the old Book Depository building for what is now the Administration offices for Dallas County (and today the Sixth Floor Museum). There was a dispute over the value of the property which resulted in going to a Court/Jury decision on the value. Well the County’s appraiser was an old timer rooted in his old ways. The opposing party brought in a young whipper snapper appraiser who presented charts, algorithms, etc. for his basis of value. After the young appraiser presented his exhaustive material to the jury, it was the old timers turn. It is said that the old timer propped his feet up on the table and exclaimed “I have found only one property comparable to this property and I recommend that we use the value from this comparison”. The jury went with the common sense approach and awarded the value based on the old timer’s value.



Matrix Team: PW Transportation & Planning (T&P) Division and PMUC. The peril that PMUC has faced in the past is best pictured below. PMUC was assisting T&P on a field trip to note onsite parameters that would affect right of way costs associated with a Call for Project submittal from one of Dallas Counties 31 cities. Thankfully, the monster dog turned leopard was contained behind steel fencing.

Additional

PMUC folklore stories can be obtained from “retired” PMUC personnel. You just have to find them.

## Proactive Dallas County Utility Coordination

Dallas County Public Works prides itself in leading change including the utility coordination and relocation efforts for Major Capital Improvement Projects throughout the County. The County works hard to partner with the utility companies as part of Public Works vision to be a leading planner, effective agent, and valued partner. The County understands the significance of successful utility coordination for the smooth, timely and cost effective execution of capital improvement projects. From this understanding we have committed man power and resources to engage our utility partners on each project. A well-coordinated utility partnering system leverages communication between the County and franchise utility companies to smoothly address issues from possible conflicts that may arise throughout the process of project delivery. Utility partnering events include: 1) monthly utility coordination meetings, 2) quarterly utility partnering meetings and 3) the annual Utility Awards Breakfast meeting in November. At the November awards meeting, Dallas County recognizes individuals from the utility companies who have demonstrated extraordinary partnering efforts with Dallas County on our projects throughout the calendar year.

### Essential Elements of Utility Partnering

Dallas County has established a list of Essential Elements of Utility Partnering from our experience in taking utility coordination to the next level. A partial list of Dallas County's "Essential Elements" includes:

1. Know the utilities' customers and **remember that we have the same customers.**
2. Have utilities move **only if absolutely necessary to achieve the project purpose.**
3. Move only once if the move is, in fact, **essential.**
4. Distribute roadway plans early to get started with the utility planning.
5. Involve and Invite Utility representatives to Neighborhood or Public Meetings.
6. Review utility company's plans, comment on plans and implement the coordination long before field work needs to begin.
7. Share accurate information with all companies & see that they share information with each other.



"Essential Utility is a gen-to suc-

Elements of Partnering" eral guide cessful utili-

ty coordination. We don't stop there; we focus in on a more detailed approach. Utility coordination is the process by which franchise utility companies and a project lead agency identify and locate facilities, determine potential conflicts, and find the best way to relocate a potential conflict or modify the design of proposed improvements around existing utility facilities. This process includes contacting all franchise utility companies at the beginning of project design along with a Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) investigation to identify and locate existing utilities. A utility conflict analysis to identify potential conflicts between existing utilities and proposed improvements is done as soon as possible in the design process. This is followed by task force meetings to determine the best way to mitigate the conflicts. Utility relocation designs are checked when provided so that proper clearances are maintained. Relocations are then monitored to insure they are done properly and completed by the time County construction starts. The utility coordination for all projects are monitored at the utility partnering events.

### Benefits of Utility Coordination and SUE

The success of a project is measured partly by how much time it takes to design and construct a project. Traditionally, it is well documented that one of the biggest factors that delay projects is the issue of utility conflicts and relocations. A Federal Highway Administration July 2002 report cites documentation to support project savings of \$4.62 for every \$1 invested in Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) which is roughly 20% of the money saved. This leaves no misunderstanding about the loss that could be incurred to projects that **do not** include utility relocation coordination including SUE investigations at the beginning of a project.

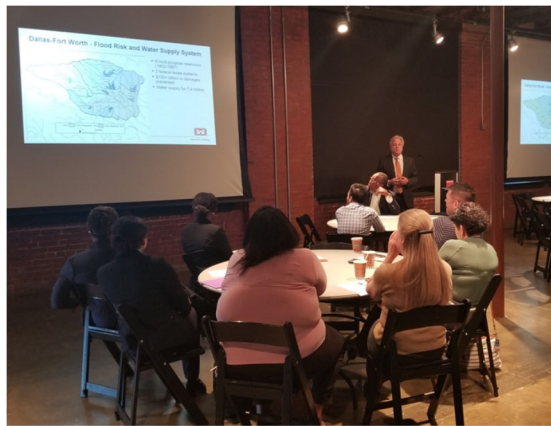
Finally, besides saving time and money in the long run, one of the most significant benefits of **proactive** utility coordination between the County and the Utility Companies is "zero relocation of a relocation" - **ORR!!** (We can all say Amen to this!)

Dallas County would like to thank all of the utility companies and their representatives for participating in our partnering and proactive utility coordination efforts.

## Southern Dallas County Cities Meetings— District 3 By: Lissa Shepard

Since 2016, cities in Southern Dallas County meet regularly to receive a presentation on development in Southern Dallas County. The group usually meets the third Thursday of every month from February to September at 9 am in the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Facility at the Sixth Floor Museum. The Cities of Balch Springs, Cedar Hill, Duncanville, Dallas, Lancaster, Ferris, Seagoville, Mesquite, Wilmer and Hutchins have all attended in the past.

In 2019, the topics included Growth in the City of Balch Springs, Higher Floodplain Management Standards, and a Legislative Update from State Representative Carl Sherman. The meetings are a great place to network with neighboring City and County officials and discuss issues impacting the Southern sector. The proposed topics for the 2020 year include Growth and necessary Utilities, Downtown Revitalization, and an ISD forum.



Jerry Cotter, US Army Corps of Engineers, speaking on higher floodplain management standards



Darryl Beatty, Dallas County Juvenile Director, speaking on Workforce initiatives in Dallas County

For more information, please contact Lissa Shepard at 214-653-7426 or [liisa.shepard@dallascounty.org](mailto:liisa.shepard@dallascounty.org)

## Spring Valley Road—District 2 Exemplifying Partnering and Overcoming Setbacks

By: Dennis Abraham

Spring Valley Road (Weatherred/Goldmark Intersection to Coit Road) is a unique project in which the County is working with the partner Cities of Richardson and Dallas. What began as an intersection improvement has grown to include nearly a mile of roadway, several intersections, and new bridges over Cottonwood and Hunt Branch Creeks. The design included upgrading the existing ROW to provide trails, new sidewalks, safer pedestrian crossings, improved signals, and such aesthetic improvements as architecturally-enhanced bridges. The indirect benefits include new utility lines, enhanced lighting, safer crossings at signalized intersections and mid-block Z-crossings, and new water and sewer lines. The vision of this project, based on Richardson's Comprehensive Plan, is to utilize mixed-use zoning to trigger the corridor's renewal. The urban road layout provides a balance of recreational and walkable trails and sidewalks with safer pedestrian crossings and several DART bus stops with shelters for inclement weather and lighting for nighttime commuters.



The project included replacing cracked and deteriorating panels, constructing new sidewalks and trails, installing American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant barrier free ramps, and adding elevated bridges that allow for the flow of a 100-year flood. Spring Valley Road achieves the functionality of moving traffic and enhancing drainage, while having pedestrian and bike-friendly sidewalks and trails.

The complex project was coordinated with partner cities to be financially and organizationally viable. From the project's conception, meetings and public workshops were held with citizens, city councils, planning and zoning, and commissioner's court. Partnerships established with the design consultant, the utility companies, and governmental organizations such as Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) and DART helped address possible setbacks and comparatively smoother construction. Monthly task force meetings facilitated brainstorming questions and challenges, resolving issues, improving productivity, and achieving project outcome prior to construction. The weekly construction meetings helped resolve issues during construction. Partnering concepts enabled the project to overcome such challenges in utility relocation and address



challenges in design and construction. Web-based communication and plan distribution has filled gaps when a project partner is not able to attend a meeting.

Complex challenges during construction addressed safety of pedestrians and protection of DWU water utilities. Spring Valley Road has a lot of pedestrian traffic and especially elementary school children. A safe "sidewalk" was constructed by using a traffic lane to address this issue. In addition, to ensure supply of water through major transmission lines, the project carefully negotiated the layout of drill piers around the major pipes built in the late 50's with the help of DWU around Cottonwood Creek and Hunt Branch bridges.

**Ribbon Cutting Celebration for this project will be held on November 22nd at 9 am at 8282 Spring Valley Rd.**



## SEATA Meetings

In 2007, Dallas County Public Works hosted its first ever SouthEast Area Transportation Alliance Meeting (SEATA), and for the past 12 years, Dallas County has successfully hosted the SEATA and SEATA/BSW Joint meetings. Dallas County also collaborates with Best SouthWest (BSW) and host joint meetings biannually.



Tushar Solanki, P.E.  
Assistant Director  
Transportation and  
Planning Division (T&P)

The SEATA meetings serve as a viable way to coordinate ideas and efforts between the southern sector cities in Commissioner John W. Price's District 3. SEATA is an organization formed to provide a forum for employers, developers, building owners, local government representatives, and others to work together to collectively establish partnerships that can effectively lead to the development of policies, programs, projects and services to address local transportation needs within the southern sector and more so Dallas County. On October 31, 2019, we co-hosted our SEATA/BSW Joint meeting with the City of Duncanville. The topic of discussion was Economic Development & Growth - Dallas County Airports. To provide expertise on the topic, we coordinated with representatives from Lancaster Regional Airport, Mesquite Metro Air-

port, Dallas Love Field Airport and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport to be our guest speakers for the event. The event was a huge success and much of that success was due to the quality presentations given. Elected officials and staff members from various cities received a thorough briefing on the topic that will aid them in understanding the importance of airports in Dallas County as well as how they can promote economic empowerment.

## Dallas County Leadership and Management



### Academy

Out of a pool of 150 committed Dallas County employees who applied, Minesha Reese was nominated and selected to be a part of the first inaugural class of the Dallas County Leadership and Management Academy of 2020! The Dallas County Leadership and Management Academy is a nine-month competency-based, leadership development program designed to build leadership capacity within the organization. The program serves to establish a pool of employees who are highly qualified and eligible to become the next generation of leaders. The program consists of 9 full day class sessions, the formulation and completion of an Individualized Development Plan and self-study, as well as a host of requirements each participant is required to complete to graduate. Minesha's thoughts on the opportunity:

"We had our first official class October 10<sup>th</sup> at the vibrant Road & Bridge District 1 facility, courtesy of Dr. Theresa Daniel, District 1 Commissioner. The facility is not only home to Commissioner Daniel's office and available meeting rooms, but is also home to our Dallas County Community Garden. The garden has already had a couple of harvests that have provided much needed food to homeless shelters in the community.

Led by County Administrator, Mr. Darryl Martin and his team, Mr. Martin is the brainchild behind the Leadership and Management Academy. He handpicked each participant with a vision to engage in a journey of leading and learning. The initial class was an overview of the program and its purpose. As a participant of the Dallas County Leadership and Management Academy, we are expected to participate in all aspects of the program, complete assignments and be active and engaged participants in all classes and activities. During the duration of class and being able to interact with the other participants and

hearing their backgrounds, it's easy to see why everyone was selected. Each participant has a drive and eagerness about them that demands to be cultivated and sculpted for leadership!



I am elated to be a part of the Dallas County Leadership and Management Academy. This is a great opportunity and I look forward to the abundant opportunities that the Leadership Academy will provide."

## Mentoring of Girl Scouts

Every October since 2016, a group of Girl Scouts within the Metroplex visits Dallas County. The Girl Scouts come from Cities within Dallas County including Richardson, DeSoto, Duncanville, Dallas and Garland.

Women from all divisions of the Public Works team – Transportation and Planning, Property Management and Utilities, Project Engineering and Management, and Engineering and Construction – share with the Girls Scouts the well-regarded Dallas County Public Works Five Phase Delivery System. This Five Phase System details the evolution of a Roadway Project by guiding the girls through all of the project phases – planning, design, property acquisition, utility relocation, and construction. Representatives from each division in Public Works share their area within the Five Phases that they are familiar with. The Girl Scouts get a good representation of what it takes to develop a project and see pictures of women taking the lead role.

At the beginning of the presentation, almost all of the ladies from Public Works raise their hand up that they were once Girl Scouts. It's interesting to see the girl's reaction when they saw that. At the conclusion of the presentation, girls were asked key questions to receive prizes for correct answers. The event is very fun and the girls look forward to returning. Here is some feedback from the past - "It's exciting to see girls in roles that men usually have". From a troop leader - "I'm an architect and I enjoyed your presentation. It covered all the bases"

All of the ladies pictured above participated in the 2019 presentation - Minesha Reese (Transportation Planner), Talour Yau (Property Acquisition Agent), Elizabeth Marquez (Engineering Designer), Lissa Shepard (Flood Plain Manager), Alberta Blair (Director), and Jurmerline



Randel (Foreclosed Property Specialist).

## Cement for Success

By Nethra Dilip, Ursuline Intern

As a senior you are smothered with expectations including that of having the roadmap for the rest of your life thoroughly graphed out and hopefully color coded too. Perhaps you are still new to the driving roads or not quite sure how to answer a quiz question on sinusoidal waves, but at least you have an even more detrimental question to answer, "What do you want to be when you grow up and where are you going to college?"

Approaching this monumental year when I will choose where and what I should study for the next four years, I have put much thought into what I wish to do with my life. Knowing I would like to eventually enter the legal field, I decided a deadly combo with engineering would be cool. Unsure of what kind of engineering and law combo, I choose the Dallas County Public Works to begin my internship and allow them to help me pave my road to success.

Through this experience I learned firsthand how the interconnected worlds of engineering and law could be impactful and almost essential to society. I attended meetings with civil engineers and developed an understanding of the projects they partook in, all while simultaneously noticing the several legal aspects of each project and



learned much of Commissioners' Courts. I was most taken aback by the amount of detail into turning Dallas County into what we know it as today. Such efforts are often underappreciated by us civilians whom these improvements are for. In one of the conferences about development on Lovers Lane even the placement of a bike trail and rack were under discussion, I had never realized how much thought and effort would go into each small decision like that. Also, being an intern with little experience in the workplace, I was taking notes on all aspects of my new opportunities. Something else that stood out to me at Public Works was how close and more exciting things are than what I would have imagined considering we are at an office. In the meetings, I could identify the variety of personalities and people that somehow were in their work environment and still managing to joke around, be productive, and all get along. I even noticed how Ms. Blair incorporated the Ursuline bonding experience, intramurals: a week of competition in the calendar of each employee. In my notepad which I brought with me to every meeting, I began to appreciate the idea that one leading team has several characteristics and in one project those roles may change over time or even circumstantially you may need to pick up new roles on the spot in order to solve the problem at hand. I was also understanding more and more about projects and terminology. From the first two days I had already felt comfortable to talk to anyone. After meetings if I had some questions I would go and learn more about it by asking individuals who were more than willing to help.

I am extremely thankful for how easily approachable everyone was. When I didn't have much to do and if people were not busy, I went around and learned a lot about how everyone got to the place they proudly are in today. From these greetings with people, I noticed how a majority of the individuals whom I spoke with said the essential idea about their job is helping the community and the county's people live in better circumstances and thus, overall maximizing utility. Proving themselves to be true representatives of Public Works as they genuinely do all their work for the public's own betterment.



Jack Tidwell and Nethra Dilip

From going to property sites, to seeing hardcopy project plans, to attending meetings, and even just talking to employees about anything and everything, I learned so much about both career fields that I am interested in and life as an adult in general. While prior to this internship I was questioning for a moment if I would truly enjoy studying law and engineering, my 60 hour journey simplified all sophisticated doubts and reassured me that my combination of both career paths can be a powerful way for me to further help my society in Serviam, all while working with topics I love.

## Preparing a Public Servant By: Shiv Gupta, UTA Intern

Working at DCPW was an experience of its own kind. When I first applied for this position, I expected it to be a heavy engineering design department which designs and takes care of public infrastructure across the county. However, it turned out what I knew was just a fraction of what is done every day at the County. There is a lot of effort and care that is invested by each division at the Department of Public Works to keep the County going and provide residents of the County with a great living experience and better mobility.

I was impressed with the whole process that takes

place within county offices for planning and pre-construction done before anyone can see anything on the ground and I am extremely thankful of DCPW for giving me such an opportunity to be part of this process. During my time here I worked on developing infrastructure standards for projects and was also taken on construction sites. These field visits with my mentors at the County helped me in getting the knowledge and acumen required while managing construction projects.

Another important aspect of project planning and delivery the that County considered for all their projects is keeping needs of the people at the core. For every project, there is a systematic massive coordination and communication between all stakeholders, which is done in order to ensure that people are informed about upcoming projects and their feedback can be collected. Besides that, I also got a chance to learn about floodplain management which is a very critical aspect of urban planning & development for safer neighborhoods.

Also, I would like to mention the unique five phase project delivery system adopted by the County, which I learned about and assisted in the call for the projects which is part of this delivery system. Overall, I had a great internship experience at DCPW and I felt inspired to do

things as an engineering professional in the way they are done at county, that is to work with purpose of serving people and engineering better communities of tomorrow.



Gupta  
Alberta

Shiv  
and  
Blair

## Retirees — Selas Camarillo, Pam Easterling, & Antoinette Bacchus



Camarillo, PE and Pam Easterling



Former Assistant Director, Antoinette Bacchus, PE

Selas



Read our interviews with Jim  
and Ed on Pages 17-19

## DCPW Utility Partner Awards 2018



### Utility Partners of the Year Jim Chase (Oncor) Ed Ostrovich (Atmos Energy)

Commissioner John Wiley Price (District 3) • Jim Chase (Oncor) • Alberta Blair (Director, DCPW),  
Ed Ostrovich (Atmos) • Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel (District 1) • John Mears (Assistant Director, DCPW)



### Award Recognition at Commissioners Court

Back Row: Commissioner Dr. Theresa M. Daniel (District 1) • Commissioner J. J. Koch (District 2) • Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins (County Judge) • Commissioner John Wiley Price (District 3) • Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia (District 4)

Front Row: Gary Tillory (AT&T) • Tim Hollingsworth (AT&T) - Special Utility Partnering Award • Edwidge Alexandre (Oncor) - Special Utility Partnering Award • Brice Cassell (Atmos) - Special Utility Partnering Award • Ed Ostrovich (Atmos) - Utility Partner of the Year • Chris Dyer (City of Balch Springs) - Special City Partnering Award • Jim Chase (Oncor) - Utility Partner of the Year • Alberta Blair (Director, Dallas County Public Works)





**Utility Design  
Partner of the Year  
Joyce Ingram  
(CobbFendley)**

Cmmr. John Wiley Price (District 3)  
Alberta Blair (Director, DCPW)  
John Mears (Asst. Director, DCPW)  
Cmmr. Dr. Theresa Daniel (District 1)  
Joyce Ingram (CobbFendley)  
Mitch Daniel, (CobbFendley)  
Tushar Solanki (DCPW)

**Special City  
Partnering Award  
Chris Dyser  
(City of Balch Springs)**

William Freeman (Balch Springs)  
Cmmr. John Wiley Price (District 3)  
Alberta Blair (Director, DCPW)  
Chris Dyser (Balch Springs)  
John Mears (Asst. Director, DCPW)  
Cmmr. Dr. Theresa Daniel (District 1)  
Susan Cluse (Balch Springs)  
Bill Harris (Balch Springs)



**Special Utility  
Partnering Award  
Tim Hollingsworth  
(AT&T)**

Cmmr. John Wiley Price (District 3)  
Tim Hollingsworth (AT&T)  
Alberta Blair (Director, DCPW)  
John Mears (Asst. Director, DCPW)  
Cmmr. Dr. Theresa Daniel (District 1)  
Teddy Andargie (DCPW)



**Special Utility  
Partnering Award  
Edwidge Alexandre  
(Oncor Transmission)**

Cmmr. John Wiley Price (District 3)  
Edwidge Alexandfre (Oncor)  
Alberta Blair (Director, DCPW)  
John Mears (Asst. Director, DCPW)  
Cmmr. Dr. Theresa Daniel (District 1)  
Jim Chase (Oncor)  
Ted Tegene (DCPW)



**Special Utility  
Partnering Award  
Brice Cassell  
(Atmos Energy)**

Cmmr. John Wiley Price (District 3)  
Brice Cassell (Atmos)  
Alberta Blair (Director, DCPW)  
John Mears (Asst. Director, DCPW)  
Cmmr. Dr. Theresa Daniel (District 1)  
Ted Tegene (DCPW)

## Recent Utility Partner Award Recipients

Year	Utility Partner of the Year	Utility Designer of the Year	Special Utility Partnering Recognition
2018	Jim Chase (Oncor) Ed Ostrovich (Atmos)	Joyce Ingram (CobbFendley)	Edwidge Alexandre (Oncor Trans) Brice Cassell (Atmos) Chris Dyser (City of Balch Springs) Tim Hollingsworth (AT&T)
2017	Chris Harrelson (Oncor)	Robert Aldape (AT&T)	Allen Crawford (Oncor) Joe Smith (Atmos) Tim Starr (City of Dallas)
2016	Jorge Barrera (Spectrum)	Daniel Talamantez (Oncor)	T. J. Hunter (Atmos) David Stauder (TxDOT) Bryan Williams (Oncor)
2015	Sue Inurrigarro (Atmos)	John Cernero (DWU)	Chris Harrelson (Oncor) Thomas Neville (DART/TRE)
2014	Amy Loo (Oncor)	Michael Kuhlenbeck (Kinetic/TWC)	Ken Brinkley (Garland ISD) Saji Thomas (Garland ISD)
2013	Larry Trojan (Oncor)	Dan Dancer (Oncor)	Jorge Barrera (TWC) Stan Breckenridge (Atmos) James McCasland (Oncor) Mike Ziegenfuss (Oncor)
2012	Ned Stewart, II (Hernandez Utilities)	Richard Brewster (Oncor)	Michael Aguirre (AT&T) Travis Cooper (Atmos) Gary Gilmore (TxDOT)
2011	Joe Crass (Oncor)	No award given	Robert Aldape (AT&T) Joe Morris (Atmos)







## PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Project #	Project	Limits	District
MCIP 10217B_4	Denton Drive, Phase I	Walnut Hill Lane to Royal Lane, Dallas	4
MCIP 15801	Spring Valley Road	Coit Road to Weatherred/Goldmark Drives, Dallas and Richardson	1
MCIP 20211A	East Dallas Veloway, Phase 3 (SoPac)	Trail from west of Mockingbird Lane to Lakewood Drive, Dallas	2
MCIP 30228_4	Medical District Drive	I-35 to Harry Hines Boulevard (includes bridge over railroad yard), Dallas	4
MCIP 31402	Pleasant Run Road, Phase 1B	Pump Station between Lancaster-Hutchins Road and Miller Ferry Road, Lancaster & Wilmer	3
MCIP 31502	Langdon Road Connector	Langdon Road to East Cleveland Street, Hutchins	3
MCIP 40226	Northaven Trail, Phases 2B & 2C	Denton Drive to west of Midway Road, Dallas	4
MCIP 42301	Cockrell Hill Road	Davis Street to south city limit north of Moler Street, Cockrell Hill	4
CDBG 6-CD03-M	Pecan Street	Live Oak Street to Cottonwood Valley Road, Wilmer	3
CDBG 6-CD03-Q	Cockrell Hill, Phase VII, water and waste water	Flo Avenue alley, Cockrell Hill	4
Open Space 90162	Cedar Crest — Honey Springs Trail Connection	Beckley Avenue at Overton Road, Oak Cliff, to Van Cleave Drive, Dallas	3 or 4

## PROJECTS BIDDING WITHIN ONE YEAR

Project #	Project	Limits	District
MCIP 11902/31901	Military Parkway	Rodeo Drive to Military Parkway, and Rodeo Center Boulevard to Galloway Avenue, Mesquite	1 & 3
MCIP 22804	Sachse Road	SH 78 to Miles Road, Sachse	2
MCIP 30221_4	Riverfront Boulevard	Cadiz Street to railroad tracks, Dallas	4
MCIP 30226_4	Cockrell Hill Road	La Reunion Boulevard to Singleton Boulevard, Dallas	4
MCIP 30228_4	Medical District Drive	IH-35E to Southwestern Medical Drive, Dallas	4
MCIP 31403	Pleasant Run Road, Phase 1B	Pump Station between Lancaster-Hutchins Road and Miller Ferry Road, Lancaster & Wilmer	3
MCIP 31405	Sunrise Road	Belt Line Road to Pleasant Run Road, Lancaster & Wilmer	3
MCIP 40810	Wildlife Parkway	SH 161 to Belt Line Road, Grand Prairie	4
MCIP 47302_3	Wintergreen Road	Intersection of Wintergreen Road, Main Street and Duncanville Road, Duncanville, DeSoto and Cedar Hill	3
CDBG 6-CD03-M	Adams Street waterline	Hart Street to Dewberry Street, Wilmer	3
Open Space 90138	Heritage Trail	Mesquite Trail north under US 80 to Towne Center Drive, Mesquite	3
Open Space 90155	Chalk Hill Trail	Chalk Hill Road west to DART's Westmoreland Station, Dallas	4

**Interview with.....****Utility Partner of the Year 2018****Jim Chase (Oncor)**  
Distribution Major Design Manager

**Please tell us a little about yourself:**

My hometown is Amarillo, Texas. But I left there in 1974 to attend college and then engage in my career here in North Central Texas. I have moved all over the Oncor service territory during my career. I consider Texas as my home.

**Where did you go to school?**

Texas A&M University

**What did you study?**

Electrical Engineering

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**

Spending time with my grandchildren, woodworking, fishing, and listening to music.

**What would you like to tell us about your family?**

Janet and I raised two sons, but to our great delight, have wound up with four granddaughters. Grandparenting is a very cool gig !!

**What attracted you to engineering? How did you come to work for Oncor?**

I've always been "at-home" around all forms of mathematics. When I was a senior in high school, I attended a trade class that was focused on electronics. That gave me the basic understanding of electricity and piqued my interest in electrical engineering. Then when I got to college – I absolutely loved it. As for Oncor – I interned for two summers during my college career, for the power company that serves Amarillo – and again, I really liked the work. That helped "cement" my desire to continue forward in the electric Utility field.

**How long, and in what capacities, have you worked for Oncor?**

I went to work for Texas Power & Light Company – one of the predecessor companies to Oncor today – in January of 1979, in Tyler, Texas. Now here I am, 40 years later, still engaged with Oncor. During my career, I have served as a System Engineering Planner, Project Manager, PM Supervisor, District Engineer, Operations Manager, and PM Major Design Manager.

**What are some of the positive aspects of working for Oncor?**

I have been extremely fortunate to have worked for a company that provided me with a wonderful, nurturing environment where I was encouraged and supported to develop myself into a fully functional Engineer and Project Manager. I received my registration from the Texas Board of Professional Engineers as a P. E. in 1984. With that in-place, Oncor provided me with a clear career path for development that I have been very fortunate to have been able to take full advantage of.





What have been some of your most enjoyable and/or challenging projects? What made them enjoyable/challenging?

My most enjoyable assignment was in Round Rock, Texas from 1984 to 1989 where I served as District Engineer for TP&L. It was a time when Round Rock was experiencing explosive growth. My team there became totally engulfed in the process of meeting commercial developers' expectations. It was a time of extremely rewarding personal growth, where I developed my fundamental understanding of general business, accounting & finance, procurement of materials, application of labor resources, and project management. As for challenges, today's new concept of "design/build" as brought-forth by TxDOT on the ultra-large Interstate Highway CDA projects has been extremely challenging. The design/build concept requires a completely new and different way of looking at project management, and on how resources are applied to meet project needs.

Have you been inspired by any mentors or role models?

Absolutely!! I have worked at many locations across the Oncor system, for many different supervisors, managers, and directors, and in association with many, many professional peers and colleagues – many of whom had a positive impact on my professional development. The ones I remember most are those who taught me how to approach my career with what I call a "questioning attitude". That is, they taught me how to listen, analyze, and use questions in a constructive and positive way to help guide the thinking of others. One of the most honorable and enjoyable aspects of a career in engineering is the ability to engage people, and appeal to their sense of teamwork to solve problems together. The more people are engaged and feel they are making a meaningful contribution, the more they feel like they are a valued part of the team. This can be accomplished through thoughtful, respectful and 'on-point' questions. My favorite approach with my new, young engineers is to teach them, "there are NO DUMB QUESTIONS ! ... so ASK THEM !"

You recently announced your retirement; how do plan to spend it?

Janet and I want to spend time with our grandchildren. We are very lucky to have four wonderful granddaughters. We want to get to know them better and spend more time with them. Beyond that, we are moving back to Tyler – where I started my career. Once there, we both want to work on deepening our faith lives, and on finding some meaningful way to serve the community. And, I'm thinking about taking-up golf (even though I've never swung a club in my life!).

Care to share something about yourself that no one would ever guess about you?

I absolutely love quality Rock & Roll and Country music! I was once a novice musician on the guitar (in a former life), and still enjoy hearing that instrument played by both those genres' top artists. Janet and I have been known to take a quick excursion trip to the more popular venues of Nashville just to pick up on a performance. I hope we may still be able to do that in this next phase of life – at least occasionally, anyway.

**Interview with.....****Utility Partner of the Year 2018****Ed Ostrovich (Atmos)****Engineering Manager**

Please tell us a little about yourself:

I was born in the coal mining town of Shamokin, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Jackson, Michigan.

Where did you go to school?

University of Michigan and University of Dallas.

What did you study?

Civil Engineering and MBA.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like to run, hike and bike.

What would you like to tell us about your family?

Diana and I were married on St. Patrick's Day at St. Patrick's church in 1990. We have two sons who are both civil engineers like their dad.

What attracted you to engineering? How did you come to work for Atmos Energy?

Growing up I always liked numbers and engineering seemed like a good choice.

How long, and in what capacities, have you worked for Atmos Energy?

I have worked for Atmos Energy since 1981. I started as an Engineer, and moved to Engineering Manager, Laboratory Manager, and back to an Engineering Manager.

What are some of the positive aspects of working for Atmos Energy?

The culture and people make it fun to work for Atmos Energy. Also, working with groups like Dallas County make it very rewarding.

What have been some of your most enjoyable and/or challenging projects? What made them enjoyable/challenging?

When TXU owned us, I was able to work in Australia three different times. Exploring a new country halfway around the world was very enjoyable.

Have you been inspired by any mentors or role models?

My dad is my role model. In first grade my dad taught me how to add and multiply numbers. I have liked math ever since.

Care to share something about yourself that no one would ever guess about you?

In Michigan, when I was growing up, I always followed the Dallas Cowboys and liked the warm weather. I was very happy to get a job in Dallas. Go Cowboys!!!





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*The projects in which Dallas County and its utility partners participate share one easily-identifiable commonality: the concept of **partnership**.*

Alberta Blair, P.E., Director  
Dallas County Public Works

John Mears, P. E.  
Assistant Director  
Engineering &  
Construction

Tushar Solanki, P. E.  
Assistant Director  
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