

The Connector

Volume 14 Spring 2022

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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Onward and Upward

“You can’t lead the people, if you don’t love the people and you can’t save the people if you don’t serve the people.”

Dr. Cornel West

I just remember thinking, “Gee, I’m 89 years old and I think that there’s lots more that needs to be done,” Activist Ms. Opal Lee, on starting the Juneteenth National Holiday Campaign, Variety Magazine, June 2021.

In 2021, we saw many changes and major events, but one in particular was the celebration of June 19th as a national holiday. Ms. Opal Lee was credited in spearheading a grassroots movement to achieve this monumental achievement. She started early in her life celebrating this day as it is a tradition in Texas. June 19, 1865, two and a half years after Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, this is the day when more than 250,000 enslaved Black people in Texas learned that they were finally free and marking the true end of slavery in America. The resulting holiday, Juneteenth — also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day and Emancipation Day — has long been a major celebration in Texas. However in June 2021, Juneteenth became a federal holiday for all of the 50 states. Ms. Lee, the ‘grandmother of the movement’, has proven we are never too old or too young to move “Onward and Upward”.

In 2021, the Public Works Department moved to the newly renovated Records Building at 500 Elm St. working with our administrative team under the leadership



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

of Ms. Tonyeka Drake. This department persevered to archive, pack, and digitize all while continuing to focus on Project Delivery for the Dallas County area. Our staff coordinated efforts through each division to get the mission accomplished. With the Olympic theme surrounding these efforts, challenges were underway for individuals as well as matrix teams throughout the year. This allowed the department to be prepared to complete the moving task.

Moving into 2022, Public Works has continued to move forward through commencing the 7th call for projects as changes occurred through redistricting. Working with our partnering cities, approximately 124 projects were approved by the Commis-

sioners court for \$270 million of county funding to leverage at least \$540 million of public improvements. Most of these projects are currently being scheduled and partnered with agencies for implementation between FY2022 – 2025.

Public Works’ strategic workshop held in January 2022 emphasized project delivery through the theme of Building Community, Building Trust and Building Change. This year, all Public Works employees will also be reading *Measure What Matters* by John Doerr in order to keep our focus in our changing environment.

Within this newsletter, we will give a glimpse of our projects, new directions and some of the people and agencies who are equipping us to move forward and continue to build our communities and build change. Public Works continues to be consistent and purpose driven. Aristotle said it best, “We are what we repeatedly do, *excellence*, therefore, is not an act, but a habit”. Our team is committed to implementing what matters as we meet the Mobility and Infrastructure needs for the Dallas County region.

Onward and Upward: Essential Transportation Connections through the MCIP 7th Call for Projects

As 2021 comes to a close, the Dallas County Major Capital Improvement Program (MCIP) 7th Call for Projects continues to progress... *Onward and Upward!* Onward because we continue to build on the success of the previous six Calls for Projects and the implementation of important projects throughout the County; Upward because of the additional resources and partnership being brought to bear on this next round of improvements. The Dallas County Public Works department (DCPW) continues working with the County's cities and towns to confirm priorities and local commitment for projects to be identified and pursued. These projects will help improve essential regional connectivity and mobility across the County in accordance with the recently adopted Dallas County Mobility Plan.

Beginning in 1999 with the 1st Call for Projects, the MCIP Call for Projects was issued and approved by the Commissioners Court seven times overall. The current value for these identified projects is nearly \$1.6B. Dallas County has a total commitment of approximately \$600M towards these projects, with participation from cities, towns, and other agencies totaling approximately \$1.0B.

This 7th edition of the MCIP Call for Projects primarily facilitates the construction of regional transportation infrastructure during the targeted time frame of FY2022 through FY2025. In FY2022, there will be \$60M available, then \$70M for each of the next three years (FY2023-FY2025) for a total of \$270M, leveraging a total of at least \$270M in required matching funds from cities, towns, and other participating agencies. This will add over \$540M worth of transportation infrastructure, improving essential regional connectivity across Dallas County.

Our 7th call resulted in 59 application packets submitted by 15 different cities. The requests totaled over \$220M in County MCIP funding. The project evaluation criteria that helped line up the types of projects submitted are shown below.

Project Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Criteria Description
Regional Mobility	This goal seeks to prioritize projects that affect multiple jurisdictions and increase access to regional travel demand generators.
Congestion & Traffic Impacts	This goal seeks to prioritize projects that maximize the efficiency of vehicular travel within the roadway network.
Multimodal Connectivity	This goal seeks to prioritize projects that enhance access and connectivity between multiple modes of transportation.
Economic Vitality	This goal seeks to prioritize projects that strengthen and increase economic opportunity and benefit historically underutilized areas.
Environmental Stewardship	This goal seeks to protect environmental resources and prioritize projects compatible with the natural environment.
Safety	This goal seeks to prioritize projects that support a safe transportation system for all users.
Feasibility & Ease of Implementation	This goal seeks to prioritize shovel-ready projects or have demonstrated support among all project sponsors.

Implementation of 7th Call Projects facilitated by the Dallas County Mobility Plan

In the upcoming months, the selected projects will be implemented through ongoing partnerships between the County, the communities, and other transportation agencies. Each community in Dallas County has been provided the opportunity to submit projects and funding requests based on what is essential to serving their own local and regional transportation needs. In addition, in recent years, communities in Dallas County have increasingly expressed interest in exploring a more comprehensive range of mobility project types that address a broader variety of issues and with benefits that serve multiple road users.

In years past, most transportation projects were focused on constructing and widening roadways to support vehicle capacity. However, with the realization that we cannot build our way out of traffic congestion, the trend in mobility planning has moved toward building more livable, multimodal streets. This was reflected in the variety of applications submitted during the 6th Call for Projects in 2012, with many requests being related to Complete Streets, improvements for active transportation, transit access improvements, and safety. And now, with the 7th Call for Projects, in the spirit of Onward and Upward, the range of applications being pursued demonstrates the growing commitment for a stronger, more diverse transportation system for Dallas County.

COCKRELL HILL ROAD RIBBON CUTTING EVENT

A celebration was held on Monday, March 22, 2021 for the Cockrell Hill Road project which runs through the Cities of Dallas and Cockrell Hill, and is also in District 4. Even though Dallas County holds ribbon cutting events on some projects throughout the year, the ribbon cutting for Cockrell Hill Road was in a way unique because it was the first project Dallas County held via Microsoft Teams due to the pandemic.

Some portion of the presentation was live and some of it was recorded. The recorded messages were done on the field where Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia, Director of Dallas County Public Works, Alberta Blair, and the City of Cockrell Hill's Mayor Luis Carrera and City Manager, Bret Haney made a recording on a beautiful Friday afternoon. The recording was done about two weeks before the event. We had help from the Commissioner's office and some of our own technically savvy staff to make sure the sound and the video was of the highest quality. We also had a recording for the event from City of Dallas Council Member Casey Thomas.



Cutting the Ribbon (From left to right: Bret Haney, Mayor Carrera, Commissioner Garcia, and Alberta Blair)

The Microsoft Teams event began with a recording of a short presentation indicating the importance of the project for not only the Cities of Dallas and Cockrell Hill, but for the region, as a major truck route for the North-East traffic movement. The before and after pictures and aerial video was also shown. The aerial video itself showed a magnificent transformation of the City of Cockrell Hill, especially the round-a-bout at the intersection of Cockrell Hill and Jefferson Boulevard as shown below.



Intersection of Jefferson Blvd. and Cockrell Hill Rd. (Looking West – After)

Following the presentation, Commissioner Garcia and the other speakers entertained questions with the attendees. The event was a success and we appreciate the efforts of the Engineering and Construction, Transportation and Planning, and the Program and Engineering Management Divisions. A special thanks to the Commissioner's staff for hosting the event.

DCPW Efforts to Support a Growing Inland Port District

The International Inland Port of Dallas (IIPOD) is an intermodal and logistics district that encompasses 7,500 acres and five municipalities. It is responsible for over 17,000 jobs, including 7,200 in the trade, transportation and utilities sectors (source: Dallas Economic Development website).

Within the IIPOD district, Union Pacific Railroad operates the Dallas Intermodal Terminal at 1550 Fulghum Road in Hutchins, providing a direct interstate highway-oriented rail link with port facilities in Houston, as well as Long Beach and Los Angeles, California. Primary vehicular access to the Inland Port is provided by I-35, I-45 and I-20.

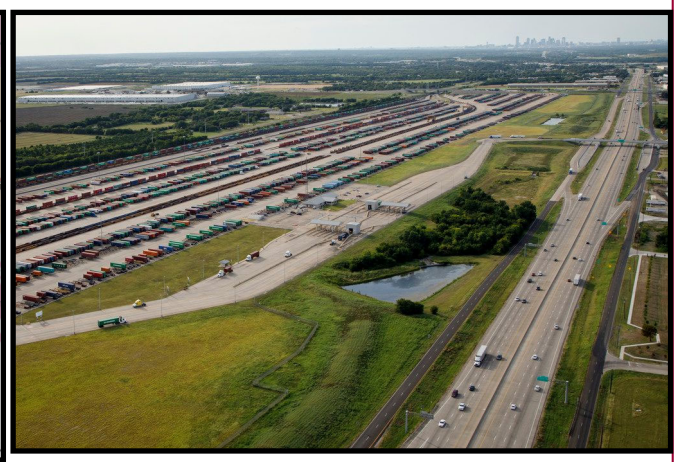
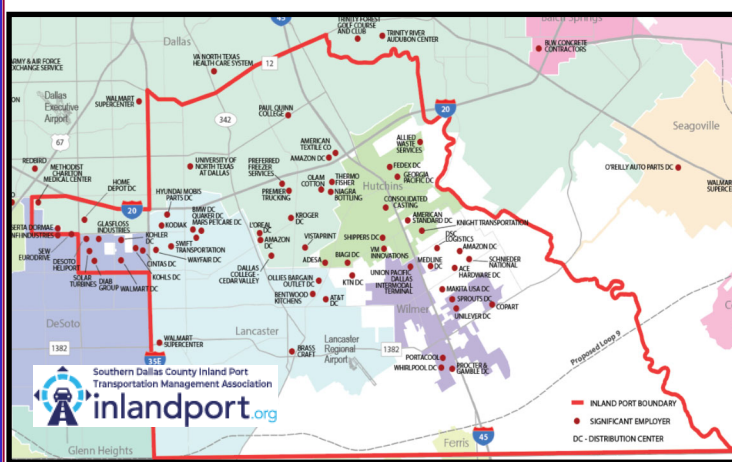
Sites in the IIPOD can also potentially be added as “usage driven sites” within the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) managed by the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Board. FTZ designation is important as it may allow businesses to delay, reduce or eliminate customs duties on some import categories. This further promotes the use of the IIPOD for international trade.

Developers, manufacturers, corporate logistics operations and distributors, as well as third-party logistics providers, have facilities in the IIPOD. One such major distribution center belongs to FedEx, which is located along I-45 near I-20. Other distribution centers in the area include those belonging to Amazon, Conn’s, Home Depot, and L’Oreal.

In order to be successful, cargo arriving and leaving the IIPOD by truck from outside the region needs to be kept relatively free flowing. In 2012, Dallas County partnered with NCTCOG and the cities of Dallas, Ferris, Hutchins, Lancaster, and Wilmer to undertake the *Southern Dallas County Infrastructure Analysis* intended to identify transportation and other needs of this sub-region in order to produce a high-quality-well-integrated inland port. A March 2021 update of this study revisited these recommendations, taking into account recently completed road projects and changing socio-economic trends, such as demand related to development of a new container terminal in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. Some of the study’s recommendations appear in the MCIP 7th Call for Projects.

The IIPOD also requires a well trained workforce. The Inland Port Transportation Management Association (IPTMA) was formed in 2019 to help coordinate transportation services for member organizations. Alberta Blair (DCPW Director) serves as IPTMA’s Board Chair; and Laura Freeland was recently hired as the Executive Director. NCTCOG’s Transit Connectivity Project was an outgrowth of this regional cooperation, and was awarded a 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant for \$8,218,080. This project includes in part the procuring of eight small electric buses and the upgrading of 41 traffic signals to improve efficient traffic and transit vehicle flow.

The Inland Port district is also the focus of two DCPW planning projects. These include a \$7.24 million Flood Protection Study funded by a grant from the Texas Water Development Board, and a Signing Study intended to better define the extents of the district, as well as to point unfamiliar drivers toward key destinations.



DCPW's Sign Shop—Always in Demand

The Dallas County Sign Shop is located at 1506 E. Langdon Road, which is within Road and Bridge District 3's property. The Sign Shop is staffed by DCPW's Transportation and Planning Division, and includes Stanley Brewer, Hilarion Olvera and Darrell Young. The crew stripes an average of 450 road miles per year for cities and 179 road miles for unincorporated areas within Dallas County.

Each year, 16 cities within Dallas County identify Type B (i.e., roadways of cross-county significance) and Type E (i.e., streets and alleys local to cities) roadways that need striping. The County, through its Master Agreements with these cities, develops Project Specific Agreements (PSAs) that identify the responsibilities, schedules, and costs for these projects. For Type B Roadways, the cost is split with 50/50 responsibility for both the City and County. For Type E Roadways, 100% of the cost is borne by the City. The total value of **2020 PSAs** handled by the Sign Shop was \$673,979. The Sign Shop also performs striping on Type A Roadways (i.e., in unincorporated portions of the county), as well as for some parking lots for rural county parks.

The Sign Shop also performs monthly inspections for 26 bridge-class culverts, inspects four dams, conducts traffic studies (i.e., traffic counts and speed limit studies), and inventories and maintains traffic signs on all county maintained roads. The Sign Shop recently acquired fabricating equipment that allows them to make custom signs, such as COVID related ones.



The County's Sign Shop at Road and Bridge District # 3 maintains signage and inspects levees within the county. Their new striping rig paints county roadways and is contracted by multiple cities as well.



Chalk Hill Trail

Oak Cliff, Texas

Oak Cliff has a rich history which includes culture, commerce, mid-20th century housing and much more. For example, one of the first drive-in theaters was located in Chalk Hill, about 80 years ago!



In fact, Oak Cliff is so chock-full of history that from time to time, a remnant of this beautiful city gets uncovered, polished up, and made to shine. Such is the case of Chalk Hill Trail. If you were a moviegoer in the 80s and a fan of the movie *Stand By Me*, you just might think that the movie producers found their inspiration to tell that story based on the “all but forgotten” railroad lines of West Dallas’ own Chalk Hill. *Stand By Me* is a 1986 movie, set in the 50s, about four young teenage friends who set out on foot in search of a deceased classmate. They follow along a train route through beautiful countryside, leech-ridden swamps, through old country towns, and yes, right on top of idyllic train tracks, as seen in the image below.



Stand By Me



Chalk Hill Trail

Since Chalk Hill and its train tracks have been around for more than 80 years, it just may have been the inspiration for this movie, and many other real-life adventures of yesterday. Well, Dallas County and the City of Dallas are making the possibility of new adventures a modern day reality.

including open-air paths



and forest-like areas of thick brush and trees



and the rocky chalk cliffs



and bridge overpasses



and the famous Ant Trail



and the railroad tracks



and yes, the trail, with its picturesque views!



The Real MVP - Mrs. Tonyeka Drake



You may ask who is that? I started at the County in September of 2019, and on my first day I heard our office is moving. I said, “Moving, where, and when?” This is when I learned that we were moving across the street into the Records Building. As I walked around our 4th floor space in the Admin Building, I thought to myself, “how on earth will they ever be ready to move”.

Little did I know that I would become the move captain for Public Works, and inadvertently responsible for making sure we were moved into the Records Building. I immediately started attending the move meetings and becoming more and more engaged in the process. It was in these virtual move meetings that I first heard the voice of Tonyeka Drake, Business Analyst in the Dallas County Criminal Justice Department. In every meeting she was positive, enthusiastic, and patient. I later found out that she was the Move Captain for Dallas County.

I remember thinking to myself there is no way she can be this way all of the time, especially not in her current role. I knew the type of issues I was dealing with in my department, and I couldn't imagine dealing with the entire County. Week after week, she approached this meeting with an optimistic perspective ‘that this move can really happen’. I thought to myself, you must not have seen all of the stuff on the 4th floor. So believe me when I say, she is the Real MVP. She was instrumental in making this move a reality.

When asked what she liked the most about the experience, she stated “actually being able to be a part of a project that was at the heart of servanthood”. Tonyeka went on to mention that ultimately the Dallas County Commissioners had a desire for County employees to experience working in cleaner and healthier conditions.

The Real MVP continued

The newly renovated Records Building is considered a WELL Building which positively impacts human health and wellbeing. Tonyeka said that her biggest challenge in leading this move “was ensuring the move captains provided accurate documentation of where everything should be relocated”. She had to constantly remind departments of the policy to not move existing furniture to the new space as a result.

It has often been said one reason people resist change is their focus is on what they have to give up rather than on what they will gain. Tonyeka echoed this sentiment when asked what she liked least about the experience. Her response was that “unfortunately some employees could not positively embrace change and refused to see the bigger picture of a cleaner and healthier work environment”.

For the departments who consistently followed instructions, Mrs. Drake believed their move went smoothly, and believe it or not there were no unforeseen issues that negatively impacted the logistics or schedule. I am convinced this is because of her efforts and her commitment to timely and effective communication with the move captains. What advice would she give to someone in a similar position or situation? If leading a project of moving more than 600 employees, the best advice Tonyeka can offer is to place the terms communicate and coordinate on repeat with the move captains.

The move for the Public Works Department went seamless. Tonyeka worked patiently with us and was always available to answer questions. I admit, in the beginning, I did not believe it was going to happen. I can now agree with Nelson Mandela, “It always seems impossible until it is done”.

By Cecelia Rutherford, P.E.

DALLAS COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

ONE FINAL MOVE

By Molita Powell & Jack Tidwell

TIME IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



ALBERTA BLAIR, P.E. a county veteran of 28-years, serves as the Dallas County Director of Public Works since 2010 and is well on her way to becoming the department's longest serving Director looking back 50 years to the directorship of C. Judson Shook, P.E. In 1993, Alberta started with the County at the Administration Building with Dallas County Public Works (DCPW). Her first impression of that building was acknowledging the history of the building. She remembers it was the first time she ever entered the building. She noted that on an errand to what was then county storage on the 7th floor of the building, she was "overwhelmed by the history of the space and by the meaning of that ongoing history."

MOVE PREPARATIONS DURING COVID-19

She noted that our preparation and move to Records Building was a smooth process with relatively little problems. This was due "to the coordination and communication with the County leadership, the moving experts and department staff." Early coordination was critical to the smooth transition of staff offices. Employees were notified of the schedule and began the process of preparing their offices very early in the process. This was really important given the varied at-home work schedules in place made necessary by COVID.

FINAL MOVE INTO THE RECORDS BUILDING

Alberta hopes the unique sense of community that was fostered in the Administration Building is preserved and even grows in the new Records Building environment. That community was a big part of life in the Administration Building since only a few departments were located there along with the Commissioners Court. Our new location in the Records Building will maintain our close proximity with the Commissioners but the total number of departments of the building will be greater. Alberta thinks all the new neighboring departments will need to concentrate on our awareness of others and sense of community. She feels the bottom line to success will be the continued consideration and respect that the County workforce has always shown.

NEW OFFICE EXPECTATIONS

Having the Public Works Department staff mostly on one floor is something Alberta has been looking forward to for some time. The department will still have some folks working at the County's Panoramic Circle location, the Sign Shop, and construction sites throughout the county. Communication should be easier according to Ms. Blair but we will still have to make an effort to involve those folks who still aren't located in the Records Building. She is particularly excited about the newness of the office and how "nice they look". Overall she is looking forward to balancing coming together in our new space while staying on the cutting edge for working remotely as the work world continues to change.

BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



Stories of Dallas County Public Works Department were once a common theme with employees who started out in the double-decker office trailer on Industrial Boulevard and in the office trailer across the street at the intersection of Commerce Street and Industrial Boulevard where the Right of Way staff once worked. Refreshed memories of the light blue shag carpet on the floor, and red and black shag carpet covering the wall behind the Secretary's desk on the first floor leading up the stairs to the second floor where three Engineers and three Draftspersons doing drafting by hand sat. The office trailers were equipped with mousetraps ready to deny long-term residence to rodents looking for food and a dry space to nest. The surrounding area was an attraction to the homeless community who took refuge on the warm porch of the Public Works office trailer for a restful night then leave behind in the parking lot, a token, before retreating. At least, according to Mary Murray, the parking for employees was free. Mary was one of the three Draftspersons on the top floor of the Public Works office trailer in April 1986 under the directorship of J. W. Bryan, and one of about 30-35 Public Works employees.

TIME IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

The Public Works Department moved in 1987 from the Industrial Boulevard office trailers to the fourth and fifth floors of the historic County Administration Building with their furniture placed into wide, open spaces. Per Mary Murray, "It was wonderful at first and then, the newness wore off".

BIGGEST DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT

When asked about the biggest improvement in the Department over the years, Mary admitted that each move has been an improvement with people, operations and technology, and credits Dallas County Public Works Department for its focus on caring about people and its attitude towards women and minorities. Computer technology was non-existent until the early 90s when employees started bringing their personal computers from home to the office. It wasn't until the Colonel, Don Holzwarth, P.E. became the Director after Allen "Bud" Beane's tenure, that computer technology was fully embraced and purchased for the Department. The design section shared one telephone and there was one computer used mostly by the Engineers.



FIRST DAY IMPRESSION

We can agree the planned move into the renovated Records Building was smooth and exceeded expectations. Employees are happier with the transition now that we are in our new spaces. The white, work surfaces are motivating employees to keep their areas clean.

COVID-19 SAFETY CONCERNS

The air is noticeably easier to breathe. There is sufficient room where everyone can practice Covid-19 safety protocols, maintain safe distances and wear masks when moving around.

MEMENTOS FROM ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Mary brought her drafting supplies from the County Administration Building to the renovated Records Building as mementos of times past, and the progression of her career in the Dallas County Public Works department, which started over 35 years ago, as a Draftsperson, on the top floor of the double-decker office trailer on Industrial Boulevard, with the light blue shag carpet. With the acceptance of computers in the department, Mary set aside her drafting tools to work as a CAD Operator and now holds the position of Engineering Technician.



TIME IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

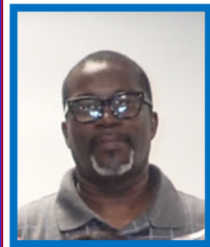
Anthony “Tony” Smith started in September 1987 when the Public Works Department was already in the Administration Building. He recalled not having an office space for the four-and-a half years working as a Surveyor. Tony’s office was in the field and at project sites, and stopping at the Department office only in the mornings to pick up his assignment for the day. It is worth mentioning that Mary Murray is the only Public Works employee who was in the Administration Building when Anthony Smith started, and the only remaining historian from the office trailers on Industrial Boulevard.

BIGGEST DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT

For Tony, the biggest improvement in the Public Works Department over the years is partnering. Partnering created the way for a smooth relationship with the cities. Now, the Department sit at the table with the cities and discuss everything that is to happen on the projects.

COVID-19 SAFETY CONCERNS

It’s difficult to judge the adjustments for Covid-19 as we are still working in shifts. Tony noted that we no longer have to share soaps and sinks in the new restrooms. From a safety standpoint, we are reminded to protect ourselves the best way possible.



FIRST DAY IMPRESSION

Office environments transcends. After 34 years in the Administration Building, Tony was very honest in his admission that his first day in the renovated Records Building was not as expected. The reason, he had no furniture. Now, his office has furniture. It is great. It has a good feeling and more people friendly.

MEMENTOS FROM ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

As mementos, Tony brought city maps, map stamps and ink, ruler and his map wheel. These historic items were made obsolete by technological advancements, that is to say, Public Works purchased computers and software. After leaving the field, Anthony Smith traded up to a new position as a Cartographer—a now extinct career of manually drawing and coloring maps. Next, he worked as an Engineering Technician, a GIS Technician and now a GIS Analyst.

TIME IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



KATHY HATLEY is a Contract Support Administrator II and started work for Dallas County Public Works (DCPW) in July 2021. She says that her first four months were right in the middle of preparing for our move so her appreciation of the Administration Building as a workplace is limited. However, growing up and living in the Dallas area led to her appreciation of the Administration Building’s history and cultural value. She was so thankful for the preparation of her small workspace cubicle before she started. Even though her office space was small, she saw the effort of the department to prepare for her arrival.

MOVE PREPARATIONS DURING COVID-19

Kathy noted her experience with other employers and said the County’s performance moving was very good. Information on the move was important to her and made her feel part of the process. Overall the move was remarkably smooth.

FIRST DAY IMPRESSION

Kathy was impressed by the organization of the move and really appreciates the size and space of her new cubicle in the Records Building. Kathy looks forward to breaking in the new space by utilizing the office and break spaces. She is really enjoying the great view of downtown for our new DCPW fifth floor offices.

2021 UTILITY AWARDS (VIRTUAL) BREAKFAST

The annual Utility Awards Breakfast has been a 13-year tradition when we have expressed our gratitude to our utility partners. This year's presentation on November 17th was a success, and the second year we have had the ceremony online due to COVID. Commissioners John Wiley Price and Dr. Theresa Daniel were on hand to offer words of congratulation to the recipients along with other affiliates from Districts 2 and 4. We also enjoyed playing a trivia game with our partners through Kahoots.

The selected awardees represented a wide range of partners including TxDOT, Dallas Water Utilities, AT&T and Kinetic Solutions, (consultant to Spectrum). The award categories consisted of the Utility Partner of the Year, the Utility Design Partner of the Year, the Agency Partner of the Year, and the Special Partnering Award.

The Utility Partner of the Year, our most prestigious award, was presented to **Jose Puente, P.E. with Dallas Water Utilities (DWU)**. Mr. Puente took over the Riverfront project for DWU during the preliminary design phase of the project and has seen it through to the 100% phase. Mr. Puente, because of his detailed diligence, has worked through a myriad of obstacles.



Jose Puente pictured above

The Agency Partner of the Year was presented to Maher Ghanayem P.E., retiree of Texas Department of Transportation. Mr. Ghanayem oversaw many local-let projects throughout the Dallas District including many trail and bicycle/pedestrian improvement projects that were federally-funded through the TA Set-Aside and Safe Routes to School programs. Maher maintained the character of a true partner throughout his tenure at TxDOT and shared his expertise on TxDOT project coordination with many of the local governments in our region.



Pictured above is Maher and his lovely bride of 42 years, Mimi.

The Special Utility Partner of the Year was presented to Mr. David Williams, with Kinetic Solutions, LLC., consultant to Spectrum. Mr. Williams has assisted the County on clearing conflicts for several jobs including BSW Wintergreen Road, Riverfront Boulevard, and Medical District Drive. David has been instrumental for executing Spectrum's relocations on these three projects and his expeditious efforts in moving lines to navigate around paved areas have helped these County projects stay on schedule. We appreciate David's willingness to promptly respond to critical situations and to support Spectrum's partnering efforts.



Pictured above is Richie Bonner with Spectrum, left, and David Williams with Kinetic Solutions, right.

The final award this year went to **Mr. Robert Rasmussen, Jr., of AT&T for the Utility Designer of the Year** for his work with AT&T. Mr. Rasmussen retired in December 2021 from AT&T and was instrumental in resolving several conflicts on the Medical District Drive Project in District 4. Robert has overseen the reconstruction of several vaults and manholes which were converted to traffic-rated structures during the road widening process. He has been helpful to resolve conflicts and to provide solutions for cable/conduit relocations as well.

Mr. Rasmussen has been instrumental in providing updates to the County when construction crews would execute work and in preventing delays with our contractor's daily operations. Robert is retiring with 29 years of meritorious service and we wish him well in his future endeavors.



Photo of Lilian Onyango, Paul Cooper, Robert Rasmussen, Lisa Sherrod (AT&T External & Legislative Affairs, Texas), and Molita Powell, left to right. Robert Rasmussen also won second place in the Kahoot trivia game at the virtual Utility Awards Presentation.

Richard Brewster, Design Services Supervisor for Oncor, won first place in the Kahoot trivia game at the virtual Utility Awards Presentation



Photo of Richard Brewster

Chad Cook, Dallas County District # 4 Office Manager, won third place in the Kahoot trivia game at the virtual Utility Awards Presentation.



Photo of Chad Cook

Recent Utility Partner Award Recipients

Year	Utility Partner of the Year	Utility Designer of the Year	Special Partnering Recognition
2020	Peter Russell (AT&T)	Chris Harrelson (Oncor Network Design)	Omid Egbal, P.E. (City of Richardson) Conrad Rodriguez (Frontier Communications) John Mears, P.E. (City of Mesquite)
2019	Richard Brewster (Oncor)	David Alpha (Iconic Consulting)	Jacqueline Culton (City of Duncanville) David Nutt (AT&T) Joe Bernal (Dallas Water Utilities) Curtis Sparks (Atmos Energy)
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)



PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION	Project #	Project	Limits	District
	MCIP 10217B_4	Denton Drive, Phase I	Walnut Hill Lane to Royal Lane, Dallas	4
	MCIP 30228_4	Medical District Drive	I-35 to Harry Hines Boulevard (includes bridge over railroad yard), Dallas	4
	MCIP 31403	Pleasant Run Road	Lancaster-Hutchins Road to Millers Ferry Road, Wilmer & Lancaster	3
	MCIP 40811	Camp Wisdom Road	Carrier Parkway to FM 1382, Grand Prairie & Dallas	4
	MCIP 22804	Sachse Road	SH 78 to Miles Road, Sachse	3
	CDBG 6-CD03-Q2	Dempster Avenue Watermains & Drainage	Burns Avenue to McLean Road	3 & 4

PROJECTS BIDDING WITHIN ONE YEAR	Project #	Project	Limits	District
	MCIP 11902	Military Parkway	Rodeo Drive to Military Parkway, and Rodeo Center Boulevard to Galloway Avenue, Mesquite	1 & 3
	MCIP 30221_4	Riverfront Boulevard	Cadiz Street to the railroad tracks, Dallas	4
	MCIP 30226_4	Cockrell Hill Road	La Reunion Boulevard to Singleton Boulevard, Dallas	4
	MCIP 40810	Wildlife Parkway	SH 161 to Belt Line Road, Grand Prairie	4
	CDBG 6-CD03-M	Adams Street Waterline	Hart Street to Dewberry Street, Wilmer	3
	MCIP 40216	Harry Hines Shared Use Path	On Harry Hines Blvd. from Webb Chapel Extension to Manana Drive	4
	CDBG 6-CD02-T	Bois D'Arc Road Waterline	Combine Road to Jimmy Lane, Combine	3
	Open Space 90155	Chalk Hill Trail	Chalk Hill Road west to DART's Westmoreland Station, Dallas	4
Open Space 90149	Cypress Waters Trail	Olympus Blvd to South Side of the Cotton Belt Rail Station	2	

Interview with.....**Utility Partner of the Year 2020****Peter Russell (AT&T)**

Structure Access Manager

Tell us about yourself?

Married with three children, and one grandchild.

Where are you from?

Home state of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. I grew up there and still return there for R&R. My wife is from Denmark and speaks Danish, French and German. We met in Wolfeboro and now have fraternal twin daughters in college and a son that works for Emerson Electric. One of my daughters played Division I Soccer at University of Arkansas.

**Would you like to share something about yourself that no one would ever guess about you?**

I have a private pilot license (instrument rating) and used to be an EMT and police officer in New Hampshire. I also enjoy British crime dramas.

What attracted you to the telecom industry?

When I was a kid I knew a "phone-man"/technician in our town. He called me on the phone from a telephone pole in my backyard and talked with me. I was intrigued that he could call me by tapping into the telephone line. So, I looked outside, and there he was up on the pole. After college, I wound up working my first job with New England Telephone and ironically, he was in the same crew as I was.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy watching pro & college sports (big Patriots fan), playing tennis, watching kids play soccer, lake sports and fond of Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire.

Education New Hampshire Technical College – Associate Degree in Electrical Technology.

How long, and in what capacities, have you worked for AT&T?

I have been with AT&T 27 years and my first position was an installation technician. I was promoted in 1999 to Manager of Engineering Design and managed the records group, installation and cable repair team, digital electronics team, and utility coordinator.

What have been some of your most enjoyable or challenging projects? I coordinated the relocations for the Stacy Road project in Allen with TxDOT. This project had many conflicts to resolve during construction that were not identified prior to letting.



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

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Dallas County Public Works**

**Cecelia Rutherford, P. E.
Assistant Director
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**Les St. John, P. E.
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