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Did you know.....

Texas ranks number one in the United States in production of oil, natural gas, cattle, sheep, wool, rice, watermelon, and cotton.

Did you know.....

Texas leads the nation in the sale of pick-up trucks.

Individual Highlights:

- President's Message
- Flex Net
- Conference Highlights
- Shuttle Buses
- Membership

From The Desk Of The President



Dear Texas Parking Colleagues:

Dear members, my name is Bob Harkins from The University of Texas at Austin. I am the past President of the Texas Parking Association and have been serving as the Executive Director of the Association. Recently our President, Jim Moran informed the Board of Directors that he was being transferred By Walker Parking from Texas to Florida and would be resigning as Association's President effective December 1, 2006.

Jim has been a very active and dedicated member of the Association. He was selected last year the Association's Distinguished Service Award. We will miss Jim greatly. I know that all join me in wishing Jim and his family the best in his new assignment. Jim will always be a part of the Texas Parking Association. Thank you Jim for making us all better professionals. Best of luck to Jim and his family.

Obviously this announcement impacts the organization. The Board of Directors met in San Antonio on Friday December 8, 2006 to discuss the coming conference and the two impacts of Jim's announcement. First was to fill the position of President. The Board asked that I assume the role of President of the Association. I agreed to serve as President until the conference in April.

The second impact of Jim's decision is it creates a Board vacancy. Additionally, Donna Wade has also offered her resignation for the Board of Directors. Therefore there were two vacancies on the Board. Over the course of the last two months, we solicited input from members asking for nominations. We had over ten very qualified people submit applications for consideration, it was a difficult decision, but I am pleased to announce that Liliana Rambo with the City of Houston and Eve Grubb with the Texas Medical Center have been selected to fill out the remainder of Jim and Donna's term. We are excited about adding these true professionals to our board, and look forward to working with them for many years to come.

As we turn the year heading toward the Annual Conference and Trade Show in San Antonio, we will seek participation by parking professionals to broaden our membership and to work on implementing our strategic plan. This includes:

Vision Statement: The Texas Parking Association will be recognized within the State of Texas and throughout the nation as the most professional and competent parking and transportation organization. TPA will lead the way for others to follow.

Mission Statement: To further the growth of parking and transportation knowledge through leadership, education, technical resources, information to members, and to assist in solving problems of the members of parking profession and related fields.

Core Values; Excellence, Professionalism, Communications, Proactive Goals:

- 1. Professional Development**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Networking**
- 4. Exchange of Information and Technology Transfer**
- 5. Legislative Activity.**
- 6. Promoting**
- 7. Recognition**

Please help us help all parking professionals. See you in San Antonio!!

Texas A&M Transportation Services Moves Forward With New “Flex” Technology

By June Broughton

Texas A&M Transportation Services

Like a number of things in today's world, parking technology has gotten more complicated and complex. It now requires multiple systems to manage all the different areas of any parking operation. This complexity is no one's fault; it is simply the natural progression of using technology to meet the growing and diverse needs of the many constituent groups we serve. New technologies are introduced and accepted in the marketplace on a daily basis. Many times the innovations are a “must have” but do not integrate well with your existing technology or systems. These innovations lead to the need for technology consolidation as companies add features and make their product more robust. Microsoft is a good example of a technology company that has added and added features through their own innovation and purchasing innovative companies. As large users of parking technology, we have asked the market for a simpler and more unified solution to our parking technology problems. Unifying disparate systems seems like the next logical step. From the parking access control perspective having all of our parking, citation, demographics, permits and access history in one database is a major step forward. The next logical step is to add the revenue control component to our existing permit and citation revenue functions. This month, we introduced such a solution with the assistance of T2 Systems – the Flex System.

The goal was to simplify the management of a large parking operation by bringing together all information regarding customers, parking capacity, facilities and finances.

The system would also allow the parking operation to choose the equipment to install in the garages (avoiding the higher cost of proprietary systems) because it would work with multiple equipment platforms. In addition, it would allow full access to all parking data and information from any computer at any time.

So why is this project important for the industry? Because the system that was developed offers a unified solution for a complex parking operation that today is managed with multiple systems.

The plan for transition to the new system here at Texas A&M began with access controlled lots in December. The next phase will be incorporating the new access and revenue control to all facilities in the system during the summer of 2007. The permit and citation management will be integrated by the end of the year.

The team that developed the system included parking professionals with many years of experience and a vendor willing to listen to what customers want. By putting together the requirements from three diverse parking operations - University of Arizona, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and Texas A&M , and adding in the knowledge of the T2 project leader, Michelle Krakowski, from auditing dozens of others – municipal, university, airport – together with T2 we developed a system that will meet the needs of most.

Here are just a few of the benefits:

- Seeing and managing all customer activity and information from a single portal
- Reporting on all sources of revenue from one system
- Taking payment for any parking item at any outlet
- Ability to migrate between hardware platforms while maintaining continuity of information and management processes
- Unified management of all parking spaces, audited or access/revenue controlled

What does all this mean for our customers? While this new system has a greater benefit for the department and university, there are some recognizable benefits for the customer:

- Better reading of access devices – means shorter wait for the gate to open
- More flexibility and convenience
- Elimination of people parking vehicles without authorization
- Accurate occupancy counts

Through hard work and dedication to being the benchmark in our industry, we are excited to be one of the first to introduce this new technology and will continue to work hand-in-hand with T2 Systems to set the bar for innovation in parking and transportation.



Kevin Uhlenhaker from T2 Systems and Jason Chapman from Texas A&M Transportation Services work together to test the new system.



A new controller from Magnetics and a network connection were placed in the gate.

Annual Conference

By Patsi Davis

Texas Children's Hospital

2006 Exhibitors

- Ampco System Parking
- ASCOM Transport Systems
- Associated Time & Parking Controls
- AWID
- BP Equipment Company
- Carl Walker, Inc.
- Cognisa Transportation
- Daktronics, Inc.
- Federal APD
- iParq, LLC
- Lasseter Bus & Mobility
- Law Enforcement Systems, Inc.
- Medeco Security Locks
- Mitchell Time & Parking
- Rydin Decal
- Parkeon
- Park Trak
- Scheidt & Bachmann USA, Inc.
- Skidata, Inc.
- Southland Printing Co., Inc.
- Spacesaver Parking
- T2 Systems
- Traffic Payment.com
- Vault Technologies
- Walker Parking Consultants

The **2007 Texas Parking Association Conference & Trade Show** is only two months away! Reserve the date on your calendars, Wednesday through Friday, April 11-13, 2007. Please go to our web site for full conference highlights at www.texasparking.org.

TPA conference participants will enjoy a blend of Latin Tropics mixed with early '60's glamour of El Tropicano Hotel. The 2007 conference rate is \$85.00 per night. The hotel has also agreed to extend the conference rate throughout the weekend of April 14 & 15. Watch your mail for postcards and visit our website at <http://texasparking.org> for online brochure in January.

The El Tropicano Riverwalk is near completion of a multi-million-dollar renovation giving the hotel a large boutique look. Guests will have a sense of déjà vu mixed with the realization that this has never been seen before. To those who visited the hotel in the 1960s and '70s, there will be plenty of Latin-inspired design, elements that recall the property's glory days as the first hotel built on the famed Paseo del Rio. For more information visit El Tropicano's website at <http://www.eltropicanohotel.com>

Guest Rooms: Guests will find great comfort in the contemporary décor of our 306 guest rooms. Rooms and suites overlook the San Antonio River, swimming pool or downtown skyline. All rooms are equipped with coffee makers, hair dryers, iron/ironing boards, data ports and full-size desks.

Services: Whether you travel on business or leisure, for a short or extended stay, our accommodations will provide you the best comfort at an affordable price. Complimentary morning newspaper, room service, guest laundry, express checkout and Internet access.

Location: At the intersection of Lexington and North St. Mary's on San Antonio's famous Paseo del Rio (Riverwalk) - accessible by foot, trolley and river barge. Just steps to elegant restaurants, fine shopping and the excitement of Riverwalk nightlife. Eight miles from San Antonio International Airport.

Transportation: Shuttles and taxis provide transportation to San Antonio International Airport for a nominal fee. Trolleys to downtown attractions leave approximately every ten minutes just outside the hotel. Enjoy the San Antonio River by barge leaving the hotel approximately every 40 minutes.

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Cutaway Shuttle Buses – Are They All The Same?

By Dan Huberty

Ampco System Parking

Every time we start thinking about buying a new 14-passenger cutaway style shuttle buses, we get into a debate as to the type of equipment we will need. And every time we explore our options, we never come up with the same solution, the reason is because it depends. What I mean is, it depends on your specific application, how many miles you anticipate putting on your equipment each year, and the tax benefits you may receive by using an alternative fuel vehicle.

Over the last few years, we have seen a push from gas engines, to diesel engines, to alternative fuel engines (such as propane and CNG), back to diesel engines, and now gas again. Quite frankly I am confused, and based on the fact that we buy a lot of vehicles every year, how could you expect to buy the right piece of equipment when only buying one unit every couple of years?

To make it easy for our people, we came up with a specification that meets our needs for our specific applications, and then we decide on the power train based on the requirements of the client. As an example, the majority of the airports where we operate require that we explore and in many cases purchase alternative fuel vehicles. As many of the Airports try to be as “Green” as possible, we operate some of the largest alternative fuel systems in the country at Airports. On the other hand, if the vehicle is for our private use, such as at our own off-airports or campus shuttle programs, we then will specify a traditional power train such as gas or diesel. We have found that the non-traditional fuel systems are not as reliable as a diesel or gas engine, and in fact the cost to maintain this equipment is at least 25% higher by all accounts. Typically, we try to avoid these types of systems whenever possible. In addition, as these are typically after market products, the overall warranty and service is typically poor.

Overall, when we specify a piece of equipment we look for several things to be added for comparison purposes. At a minimum, especially in Texas, we recommend that you buy as big of an air conditioner as possible for your new shuttle. As the hot weather can destroy an under capacity bus, we always put a large unit in our equipment. We also recommend a larger than specified alternator. As the larger air conditioner will require more power, a larger alternator will be required to charge up the batteries. Be sure to have your unit pre-wired for all communication systems, including GPS, two way radios, and any aftermarket camera systems. Again as this is a draw on the power source, having it done by the OEM will ensure it properly installed. Finally, when deciding on what type of traditional power train you will need, one needs to determine the useful life of the equipment. What I mean is, you need to decide if you are going to run high miles every year with a big load on the engine, if so then a diesel engine may be the way to go. Although the initial cost is usually \$6-7k higher per unit, the overall maintenance costs and fuel efficiency will offset these costs over the long run. On the other hand, if your application is not as laborious, then you may be able to use a traditional gas engine. Although the fuel consumption is a little higher per mile driven, the overall costs are much lower for a gas engine.

As there are several different manufactures of this type of equipment, what it comes down to when you decide to buy a new bus is the trust level of the dealer selling the equipment. We have worked with several exceptional dealers over the years and have worked with some dealers who do not stand behind their products. Do your homework, ask around and find the right dealer for your needs. Price alone should never be the determining factor when buying a new bus.

Navigating The Change Process

By Bob Harkins

The University of Texas At Austin

In today's society, change is a constant. Organizations are constantly changing to meet the demands of today's society:

Customers demand and expect more.

The economic conditions of today's market require all to examine what they do and how they do it.

All leaders must understand the nature of change and how to lead their organization through the change process. The underlying questions are:

How do you create change?

How do you lead the change process?

If you recognize there is a critical need for change, you must convince the organization that there is an urgent need for change. Each day you as a leader must be looking at your processes and procedures. Do those processes and procedures make sense? What can be done to improve how business functions are preformed? Often, that is easier said than done.

To get the organization to accept change you as the leader must be able to articulate what the cause if the problem and what positive effects can happen if changes are made. The leader must create a vision of the benefits of the change that is clear, completing, and shared by others. Develop a plan that keeps focus on the purpose that change is being made and the benefits that will follow.

As a leader, you have to create excitement and get employees to step up to the plate and participate in the change process. Help everyone understand the challenges that exist and the benefits of the proposed changes. Leaders encourage others to take responsibility for solving challenges. This may entail changing organizational structure and the way people behave. Don't shy away from that challenge if it is needed.

As the leader you should continually challenges to the organization to keep the momentum going. Challenge everyone to improve and do things better. The leader has to assess the emotional climate of the organization and deal with the complex emotions that change triggers. If the leader does not, employees – either consciously or not – will shut down the process.

Continuously, throughout the change process the leader will have to deal with the human side of change. In this process there must be a continual assessment of the process and the effects. The leader must be aware of his or her own feelings and reactions. The leader must act to facilitate, not sabotage, the change process.

Change is scary. Change is never easy, but by spending time on the front side understanding and preparing for change you can successfully lead your organization. Step up. Articulate your vision and lead the process of change.



Texas Parking Association

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
WWW.TEXASPARKING.ORG

Membership Has Its Privileges

**By: Dan Huberty
Ampco System Parking**

The Texas Parking Association offers three different levels of membership. They include:

Regular.....\$125 [Voting privileges] (Representatives of municipalities or other government bodies or parking authorities, transportation authorities, boards, bureaus, commissions or departments, also including universities, colleges, airports, hospitals, stadiums and auditoriums, or other institutions having similar responsibility for the establishment, operation, maintenance, control or direction of public parking..)

Affiliate.....\$150 [Voting privileges] (Representatives of corporations or consultants, private developers or individuals engaged in supplying goods or services to the parking industry or interested in or involved with the operation and development of institutional or municipal parking, whether for profit or otherwise and who support the objectives of the Texas Parking Association.)

Associate.....\$75 [No voting privileges] (Representatives of the Regular and Affiliate members or any other individual, corporation or Association that the Board may elect.)

A download of the application can be found at www.texasparking.org.



**Coming Next Issue:
Conference Highlights**

TPA Board

The foundation of the TPA is that it is a volunteer based organization designed to enhance the parking industry within the State of Texas. Listed below is the current 2007 Board:

- Interim President – Bob Harkins – University of Texas At Austin
- Vice President - Brad Conner - Federal APD
- Secretary – Patsi Davis - Texas Children’s Hospital
- Treasurer – Jerry Dinse - Austin Bergstrom International Airport
- Eve Grubb – Texas Medical Center
- Chris Golgert - Program Management
- Daniel Huberty - Ampco System Parking
- Chris Archer - Associated Time and Parking Controls
- Rod Weis - Texas A&M
- Eric Estell – First Transit
- Liliana Rambo – City of Houston