

Happy 20th Birthday PTN

September 1 marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Public Transportation Division (PTN) at the Texas Department of Transportation. In those days, the department was known as the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT) (what a mouthful!) and PTN had previously been a subsection in what is now the Transportation Planning and Programming Division.

Richard Christie was the first division director and led the unit through its formative years. The initial PTN administration also included Dick Chapman, assistant director; Margot Massey, overseeing grants; and Ed Collins in charge of the planning section. Succeeding directors include Judy Bynum, Margot Massey, and Sue Bryant, and Eric Gleason. Interim directors were Jim Randall, Wayne Dennis and Bobby Killebrew.

The Division's first minute order request of the Transportation Commission came in December of 1988 and concerned the submission of an application to the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA - now the Federal Transit Administration) for an entrepreneurial services program grant in the Houston area. In January 1989, the Division received approval to participate in an UMTA demonstration drug control project for small urban and rural transit agencies. June and July of 1989 saw the first presentation of funding requests, the first transferring Governor's Apportionment funds that were about to lapse and the second for the annual rural program funding.

Federal fiscal year 1989 apportionments placed the Governor's Apportionment at \$12.4 million; the rural program at \$3.8 million; and the elderly and individuals with disabilities program of \$1.6 million. At that time there were 16 (of a possible 22) small urbanized transit agencies. The count for rural agencies was 40, eight of which are no longer stand-alone organizations. Nearly 200 elderly and persons with disabilities agencies are listed in the 1989 *Texas Transit Statistics Report*.

A change in the early 2000's, targeting the funds for the Section 5310, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program, has lead to a decline in the number of such agencies. Otherwise, with virtually, the same staffing level, today the division has responsibility for larger and more complex programs, both in terms of the number of subrecipients and the amount of funding they receive.