

## A Curious Mind, a World-Class Scientist

For Darwin Prockop, the search would become the answer

BY SUMMER MORGAN

**Darwin J. Prockop** can't remember exactly how many times he changed majors as an undergraduate at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. He just knows it was often: "Probably once a month within the span of a year and half." Economics became physics, then chemistry, social sciences, mathematics...he eventually settled on philosophy.

It would perhaps not be surprising that his next degree was a master's in animal physiology, from the University of Oxford. Nor that on his return to the United States he earned a medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania. But what he really wanted was to become a psychiatrist.

Sort of. "I finally woke up to the idea that I would be a terrible psychiatrist," he says. "I'm not that good at listening to people forever."

But the intellectual and career sojourn had not been without meaning. While in medical school at Penn, the future world-renowned scientist worked on a number of research projects. He realized that was the common thread to all his quests: the seeking of answers. "Once you get into research it's hard to stop," he says. "It's the excitement of discovery and the chance to do work that could affect thousands of people at once. When you're a doctor, you can only deal with one patient at a time."

Prockop's first research interests, pursued over decades, concerned scars. He investigated the biosynthesis of collagen, the tough fibrous protein found in bone, cartilage, skin and other tissues. He and his colleagues were able to define the complex pathway by which cells synthesize collagen, leading to the production of pharmaceuticals that can inhibit excess deposits of collagen that form harmful scars.

Some of the drugs were further developed by a biotech company Prockop helped found and are currently being tested as treatments for anemias, myocardial infarction

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**SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS** Darwin Prockop is most at home in his lab, where he is currently researching the healing potential of adult stem cells.

## Teaching Excellence Awards

Expanding into second semester

BY ROD DAVIS

**When Immaculata Igbo**, a newly tenured associate professor in the College of Nursing at Prairie View A&M University, got the news last March that she would receive \$2,650 for the pilot semester of the Teaching Excellence Awards launched by The Texas A&M University System in fall 2008, her students broke into cheers. "Receiving this award inspires me to aim for greater heights. I promise to rededicate myself to teaching and student success," Igbo subsequently wrote to Michael D. McKinney, chancellor of the A&M System.

It was exactly the kind of reaction McKinney had hoped for when he carved \$1.1 million from the system budget to fund the student-led awards, one of the most extensive kinds of programs in the nation. And it wasn't the only show of support. SLATE (Student-Led Awards for Teaching Excellence), the student organization that administered the evaluations at Texas A&M University, sent a letter to the Aggie faculty winners praising their pioneering participation. "This distinct honor is designed to allow students to recognize those teachers who go above and beyond the typical expectations to deliver a first-rate education. We truly appreciate everything you've done."

In all, 80 faculty members from PVAMU, Texas A&M, and Texas A&M University-Kingsville were honored for the premiere semester. The winners represented the top 18 percent of the nearly 500 faculty who participated. The top 3 percent received amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The next 15 percent received \$2,500 to \$5,000. Texas A&M had the most award recipients, with 46, followed by PVAMU with 18 and Texas A&M-Kingsville with 16.



**MAKING THE GRADE** PVAMU President George C. Wright (center) congratulates recipients of the A&M System's first-ever Teaching Excellence Awards.

The awards expanded to all nine campuses of the A&M System this spring, and now include the top 20 percent of participating faculty. Results are based on rankings from evaluations created by students, faculty and administrators across the system with weighting for factors such as class size. Approximately 160 winners for the spring will be announced in July.

"We are off to a tremendous start in our pilot year," said McKinney. "As it evolves to all our campuses, we'll see the positive impact on teacher morale and student interactivity increase geometrically. Because the awards are student-driven, they give our young people a sense of the power and responsibility of being stakeholders in education and in society. I am very happy with the way this program is taking root across the system."

**More information:** To learn more about participating as a student or faculty member in the Teaching Excellence Awards, visit the website at: <http://www.tamus.edu/offices/academic/awards/chancellor.html>

## A&M System and Port of Corpus Christi Authority Sign "Historic" Agreement for Research Center

Naval Station Ingleside site to focus on renewable energy

BY ROD DAVIS

**The standing-room** only audience packed into the Port of Corpus Christi Authority's meeting room in the Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center on April 28 was evidence enough that something big was unfolding. But Ruben Bonilla, chairman of the PCCA, put it into words: "This is a historic and monumental day, a defining moment for the Port of Corpus Christi."

Minutes later, Bonilla and Michael D. McKinney, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System, signed an agreement for the A&M System to develop 1,009 acres at Naval Station Ingleside and adjacent property. The soon-to-be closed minesweeper base will be transformed



**A VIEW FROM ABOVE** The base for Naval Station Ingleside, scheduled to close in September 2010, will be redeveloped for renewable energy research by the A&M System under an agreement with the Port of Corpus Christi Authority.

into a powerful national center for renewable energy research, especially wind energy. It also will be used for training, education and commercial enterprise.

The agreement includes 576 acres at NSI, and 433 undeveloped acres owned by the PCCA. The NSI property reverts to the PCCA when the base officially closes in September 2010 in accordance with a 2005 decision from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

At its height of activity, the 17-year-old Naval Station Ingleside employed approximately 3,000 military and civilian personnel and created another 2,000 indirect jobs in the area. The PCCA, which has been seeking a major institution to convert the base to commercial use, had been in talks with the A&M System for months.

"The A&M System brings to our partnership the experience and power of one of the world's flagship university systems along with a wide range of academic excellence and advanced study programs in biotechnology, energy, transportation, technology commercialization, engineering, and health sciences," Bonilla said.

McKinney told the PCCA meeting that the opportunity to develop the base property, which includes a deepwater port capable of withstanding force 5 hurricanes, represented a crucial step in the system's strategic efforts. "We're going to make the A&M System a model among institutions of higher learning for driving the economy in ways that have never been done before. The innovations that will follow as a result of this important agreement reflect a wide-ranging commitment by the A&M System to lead the way in cutting-edge research to improve all our lives and bring jobs to Texans. A great university system with a rich land-grant heritage can reach out to all aspects of our society."

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## Teaching Excellence Awards

**Top 3 percent fall 2008 winners, by campus:**

Texas A&M: Larry Butler, Charles Conrad, Mahmoud El-Halwagi, Ganesa Gopalakrishnan, William Heyman, Joe Horlen, Gina Reinhardt, Jeffrey Savell, Benjamin Welch, James Womack

PVAMU: Annette McClinton, Orion Ciftja, Alex Colvin  
Texas A&M-Kingsville: Mauro Castro, Karen Furgerson, Cyndi Walker-Ewert

# Notes from the Chancellor

MICHAEL D. MCKINNEY, M.D.

A number of people continue to berate tenured professors and the idea of tenure in higher education.

Tenure is designed to recognize and protect faculty who are chosen by their peers and admired for their excellence.

Many of the critics of tenure are also strong proponents of a “market-based economy.” We pay CEOs, entertainers, professional athletes, college coaches, presidents, and chancellors based on the market, not necessarily on their measurable contributions to the society, the company or the university (see hedge fund executive salaries).

At Texas A&M University, the highest-paid faculty member makes nearly \$340,000 per year. A very good salary, but with a Ph.D. in engineering and a number of teaching awards, patents and innovations to his name, he makes considerably less than many administrators or coaches.

The average salary of a tenured professor at Texas A&M (9-month academic year, including benefits) is about \$148,000. The average at our regional universities is \$84,000. The critics who are also advocates for pay-for-production simply divide the professor’s salary by the number of students taught and arrive at a cost-per-student-taught.

Obviously there are costs other than the professor’s salary. Just as obvious, the value of high quality teaching in a market-based economy is not the same for freshman English as it is for a doctoral course in physics. The State of Texas recognizes this through the higher education funding formula. Physics doctoral program hours are funded at a rate 19 times as high as freshman English. The market value is much more complicated than simple division and includes the values determined by students.

There is also frequent criticism of the “arcane research” done by professors and the publication of seldom-read articles of no general interest. This is usually followed by another simple arithmetic calculation wherein the research expenditures are divided by the income generated from patents and licenses. At The Texas A&M University System we take pride in our land-grant mission of making research available to the masses and in our research commercialization programs. While it is true that some faculty, just as in all professions, fail to maintain their excellence, extrapolating from the specific to the general is faulty logic.

We have a well-known faculty member who has a lifelong commitment to research and higher education. Norman Borlaug is a Nobel Laureate and the recipient of more than 30 national and international accolades, including the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Last year the income to the university from his innovations was zero dollars. But his contributions to the well-being of the world are not reflected in his patent revenues. The title of his biography is *The Man Who Fed the World*.

# News Briefs

## A&M System impact on Brazos Valley reaches more than \$3 billion

An in-house study by Texas A&M University found that the university and other members of the Texas A&M System headquartered in College Station and Bryan had a direct \$1.3 billion impact on the two cities and the surrounding area during 2008, an increase of about \$146.5 million compared to the previous year. Adding the impact of those dollars being reinvested throughout the region, the total is about \$3.28 billion—nearly \$366 million more than the prior record set in 2007.

## A&M-Corpus Christi scientists contribute to ‘Ocean in Google Earth’

Scientists at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi played a vital role in the creation of “Ocean in Google Earth,” a feature of the newest version of Google Earth that allows users to scan and research the ocean bottom. The idea was inspired by **Sylvia Earle**, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence and chair of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico at A&M-Corpus Christi. Earle is chair of the Google Ocean advisory committee, a group of leading U.S. marine scientists and oceanographers that includes **Wes Tunnell**, associate director of the HRI. **Ian Macdonald** and **Tom Shirley** also contributed to the project.



## Texas A&M dedicates new nuclear imaging facility

On Jan. 23, Texas A&M dedicated a new state-of-the-art nuclear magnetic resonance facility. The NMR facility supports highly specialized scientific studies by units of Texas A&M, AgriLife Research and the Texas A&M Health Science Center. Construction is already under way for the \$15.4 million facility in the area just south of the biochemistry and biophysics building, where the present NMR facilities are housed. The new NMR facility, which will consist of three floors and contain approximately 37,282 gross square feet, is scheduled for completion by mid-2010.



## A&M-Commerce player drafted by WNBA

Texas A&M University-Commerce senior **Britney Jordan** has been chosen as the 35th overall draft pick by the WNBA’s Los Angeles Sparks, the first women’s basketball player in the school’s program history to be selected. Earlier this year, Jordan was featured in *Sports Illustrated’s* “Faces in the Crowd,” which features amateur athletes from around the nation who have excelled in their sport.

## A&M System chancellor receives highest UTMB alumni award

**Michael D. McKinney**, chancellor of the Texas A&M System, was among four Texas physicians who received the University of Texas Medical Branch Ashbel Smith Distinguished Alumnus Award in May. The award is the highest alumni honor bestowed by the university’s School of Medicine Alumni Association, and recognizes outstanding service to the medical profession. McKinney is a 1976 graduate of the UTMB School of Medicine. Before joining the A&M System in 2006, he served as senior executive vice president and chief operating officer for the University of Houston Health Science Center. He is a former chief of staff to Gov. Rick Perry, and was appointed commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission by former Gov. George W. Bush.

## A&M-Texarkana posts record enrollment for spring semester

Texas A&M University-Texarkana set a new student enrollment record for the spring 2009 semester. Certified student headcount was 1,738, compared to 1,648 for the spring 2008 semester, a 5.6 percent increase. Headcount is up by 113 students, or 7.1 percent, compared to the fall 2008 semester enrollment of 1,625.

## A&M System inventors receive Patent and Innovation Awards

Texas A&M System’s Office of Technology Commercialization presented Patent Awards to individuals and teams whose inventions were granted patent protection from the United States Patent and Trademark office in 2008. In addition, three Innovation Awards were presented to scientists and inventors whose research exemplifies the spirit of innovation within the A&M System: **Kenneth R. Hall**, deputy director of the Texas Engineering Experiment Station and associate dean of engineering at Texas A&M University; **Darwin Prockop**, director of the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Scott & White; and the Texas Transportation Institute’s Roadside Safety Division inventors **C. Eugene Buth**, **Dean C. Alberson**, **Roger P. Bligh**, **D. Lance Bullard Jr.**, **Akram Abu-Odeh** and **Hayes E. Ross Jr.**



## Wives of state legislators tour A&M System facilities

Legislative Ladies Day on March 4 introduced the wives of Texas House and Senate members to the educational, research and extension programs of the A&M System. The biennial event was hosted by **Chancellor Michael D. McKinney** and his wife, **Lou Ann**. Among the attendees were **Beverly Ogden**, wife of **Sen. Steve Ogden** (R-Bryan) and president of the Senate Ladies Club; **Michelle Dunnam**, wife of **Rep. Jim Dunnam** (D-Waco) and president of the Legislative Ladies Club; and **Julie Straus**, wife of **House Speaker Joe Straus** (R-San Antonio). “I’m so excited to see the contributions the A&M System makes to the nation and the world,” Mrs. Straus said. **Porter S. Garner**, president and CEO of The Association of Former Students, hosted a luncheon for the visitors, which included **Regent James P. Wilson**.



# New University Leaders Take the Reins

BY AMY HALBERT



**WARM WELCOME** *Steven Tallant, Texas A&M-Kingsville’s new president, explains his vision for the future of the university during his February investiture.*

**Chancellor Michael D. McKinney** traveled nearly the length of Texas last February to attend investiture ceremonies for three of The Texas A&M University System’s newest presidents: Texas A&M University-Commerce’s Dan Jones, Texas A&M University-Texarkana’s C.B. Rathburn and Texas A&M University-Kingsville’s Steven Tallant.

In Texarkana, Rathburn was inducted as president on Feb. 5 at the Perot Theater. Speaking to guests that included dignitaries from across the A&M System, Rathburn said, “It is our vision to create a comprehensive live-learn-work-play environment for our students, faculty and staff that celebrates our collective successes and provides an opportunity for each student and staff member within the university to truly enjoy their professional and educational experience.”

In Commerce, Jones’ Feb. 6 investiture was combined with a groundbreaking ceremony for a new music building. “It is incumbent upon us, as a community of

educators and current citizens of the village of Texas A&M University-Commerce, to go about the pursuit of our mission with a shared commitment to three principles: integrity, innovation and imagination,” Jones told the assembled guests.

Nearly 500 miles south in Kingsville, A&M-Kingsville’s newest president officially became a Javelina, receiving a university ring. “My vision for Texas A&M University-Kingsville is to make it the premier university in South Texas,” Tallant said at his Feb. 20 investiture ceremony. “I took this job because I recognized the incredible legacy of this university, and I also the recognized the great potential that is here. Today, I stand ready to join our Javelina pioneers—and you—as we embark on what I truly believe is Texas A&M University-Kingsville’s next ‘Moment of Opportunity.’”

An investiture ceremony for President Dominic Dottavio is scheduled at Tarleton State University Oct. 2.

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# National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing: Changing the Game

BY ROD DAVIS

**Brett Giroir's** favorite challenge is for someone to say "it can't be done." So when told that there was no way to meet 21st century bioterror threats or to distribute drugs and vaccines to fight fast-changing epidemics like influenza or virulent diseases such as cancer, his response was simple. "Absolutely it can be done."

And in one place.

Less than a year after joining The Texas A&M University System as vice chancellor for research, the former director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency had not only solved the puzzle, but done so in a way that combines a revolutionary approach to manufacturing with a "biomedical cluster" concept that will bring jobs to Texans and put the state at the forefront of a new wave in therapeutics innovation.

The three-tier project will be anchored by the National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing, a "first-in-class," flexible therapeutics manufacturing and academic training facility scheduled to begin operation in 2011-12. Start-up funding, provided by a \$50 million grant from the State of Texas' Emerging Technology Fund, was authorized Jan. 2 in a joint letter signed by Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and then-Speaker of the House Tom Craddick.

A state-of-the-art GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) facility, the NCTM will join two renowned research institutions on the Texas A&M University campus: the Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine, jointly operated by the Texas A&M Health Science Center and Texas A&M, and the Texas Institute for Preclinical Studies, operated by Texas A&M. The combined resources will make the three facilities "the best place in the world to discover new therapies (TIGM), the best place to perform pre-clinical evaluations of new therapies (TIPS) and the best place to manufacture them (NCTM) in one location—College Station," Giroir said.



**NICE JOB** Guy Diedrich (left) and Brett Giroir (right), in foreground, congratulate workers completing one of the portable modules to be used at the NCTM.

Management of the center initially will be provided by the Texas Engineering Experiment Station. An eventual partnership will be formed with a commercial pharmaceutical firm. Such collaborations mean that the production of therapeutic drugs that otherwise have been going to California, New Jersey and other locations will remain in-state.



**FLEXIBLE-BY-DESIGN** The new National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing will use models such as these to allow manufacturing of various quantities of drugs and vaccines to meet changing needs.

Initiated by Giroir and Guy Diedrich, vice chancellor for federal relations and commercialization, the NCTM will become the international destination for research and application of new technologies for the development of medications to combat diseases.

"We're creating a prototype that is absolutely critical for improving the nation's ability to develop new vaccines and therapeutics in an accelerated and cost-effective manner. It will be especially important in the larger goal of protecting our citizens from the threat of bioterror weapons such as anthrax and Ebola virus," Giroir said.

"This center sets a national standard for aligning the strengths of academic research and commercial application for a broad-ranged public benefit," said Diedrich. "The system has been at the forefront of creating marketplace models of innovative collaborations that show the tremendous power of technology to dramatically reshape the economy and our lives."

Giroir said that the center will forge an entirely new model for producing critically needed drugs for the nation. In collaboration with academic researchers and commercial companies, it will develop an innovative "flexible-by-design" manufacturing system allowing rapid production in precisely targeted quantities. Conventional manufacturing plants, in comparison, specialize in the mega-production of one type of drug only.

"We don't need 500 million doses of many critical therapies, such as antibodies for specific cancers, or vaccines for plague," Giroir said. "We need one or five million doses, or even fewer as medicine becomes precisely targeted and personalized. In conventional manufacturing, as the batches get smaller, they take much longer to produce and the costs skyrocket. The result can be a scenario in which the perfect medicine to cure a specific tumor could cost \$1 million per dose, and arrive a year after the patient needs it."

Giroir credited the international expertise available in College Station as a key factor in locating the NCTM in Texas. "The College of Engineering at Texas A&M is the source of some of the most brilliant researchers in the world," he said. "Faculty in the departments of chemical engineering, industrial and systems engineering, and biomedical engineering have been absolutely essential for catalyzing needed innovations. Perhaps even more importantly, they are developing programs to train students for careers in therapeutics manufacturing."

"Everything about this plan tracks with the best interests of the A&M System, the state of Texas, and the health and security of the nation," said Michael D. McKinney, chancellor of the A&M System. "The benefits of creating the National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing here, now, will be felt in multiple ways for decades to come. We're going to revolutionize the way these drugs are made."

## Research Briefs

**Texas A&M professor awarded Hogg Foundation mental health research grant**

**Jamilia Blake**, assistant professor of school psychology in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University, has been awarded the Hogg Foundation Junior Faculty Mental Health Award. The one-year, \$15,000 research grant will be used for Blake's study, "Examining ethnic differences in youth aggression: The role of parental socialization practices."

**Texas A&M-Kingsville professor receives National Science Foundation award**

**Yifang Zhu**, an environmental engineering assistant professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, has been awarded \$400,000 by the National Science Foundation CAREER Program for her work in understanding vehicular-emitted ultrafine particles. Zhu was recognized for research that focuses on transport and transformation of UFP from vehicle tailpipes to within the vehicle cabin. UFP are a major component of vehicular emissions that have been linked to adverse respiratory and cardiovascular issues.

**Laredo city council approves building of pilot plant using Texas A&M professor's technology**

The Laredo City Council will build a pilot plant to field-test a new method of desalinating brackish (salty) water. It was developed by **Mark Holtzapple**, a professor in Texas A&M's Artie McFerrin Department of Chemical Engineering. Laredo is almost at the limit of water it can draw from the Rio Grande, and groundwater in the area is brackish. The desalination plant, which will produce 50,000 gallons of water a day, will test water desalination technology developed by Holtzapple. The Texas Engineering Experiment Station and The Center for Applied Technology, a center within TEES, will act as the technology integrator and analyst for the project.

**Governor announces Emerging Technology Fund investment in Health Science Center**

Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Scott & White has been awarded a \$5 million investment through the Texas Emerging Technology Fund to recruit leading scientists focused on regenerative medicine technologies to the recently created Institute. The Institute will use adult stem cells to develop new therapies to combat human diseases such as osteoarthritis, diabetes, Parkinson's, spinal cord injury, stroke, Alzheimer's, cardiac diseases, kidney diseases, and pulmonary diseases.

**A&M System ramps up fiber optic electrical current sensor with green technology**

The Texas A&M University System has executed a license agreement with Areva, an international electric utility supplier based in France, for production of a new environmentally friendly electric utility current sensor. The sensor, used for transmission and distribution, is based on fiber optics and uses a Sagnac interferometer to acquire phase shift data for measurement. It completely eliminates the need for environmentally dangerous oil-filled equipment and doesn't rely on expensive SF6 gas, which has been designated an undesirable "greenhouse" gas by the Environmental Protection Agency.

**TAMUQ signs agreement with RasGas**

RasGas, Qatar's leading developer of natural gas projects, has signed a third research agreement with Texas A&M University at Qatar. The new project will improve technologies that allow gas mixed with condensate to be extracted more efficiently from the reservoir. It also will establish laboratory facilities to support additional research projects. More than a year ago, RasGas and TAMUQ initiated their first research project, developing wireless technology for downwell communication.

## WTAMU STUDENTS GIVE CHANCELLOR'S CENTURY COUNCIL EMOTIONAL ACCOUNT OF VISIT TO ZAMBIA

Students in West Texas A&M University's acclaimed freshman reading program spent 11 days in and around Lundazi, Zambia, in March to learn more about African people and culture after reading Dave Eggers' **What is the What**. The novel is a fact-based account of the ordeal of the "Lost Boys of Sudan." In an emotional presentation to the Chancellor's Century Council meeting at WTAMU in April, students told of their experiences in Zambia working with local villages to build improved sanitation systems and prevent malaria, the number-one killer of children in the country. The students announced the "Readership WT 'Nets' Gain" project to raise money for \$5 mosquito nets for the Lundazi area, and CCC members immediately donated more than \$2,000. To date, WTAMU has raised \$4,800 toward their goal of \$10,000.



## Recent Appointments



**GLEND A BALLARD** was named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences & Education at Texas A&M University-Texarkana by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents in March. Ballard had served as interim dean since February 2008. Ballard earned her bachelor's degree in student personnel and English, and her master's degree in student personnel and guidance from Texas A&M University-Commerce. She received her doctorate in adult education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Ballard's career at A&M-Texarkana started in 1997 as a part-time instructor for the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences program.



**G. KEMBLE BENNETT** was named director of the Texas Engineering Experiment Station by the Board of Regents in March. Bennett also serves as vice chancellor of engineering for the A&M System and dean of the Dwight Look College of Engineering at Texas A&M University. As director of TEES, Bennett manages a partnership of institutions, industries and communities that work

together to strengthen engineering research and development across the state. With headquarters in College Station, the agency's contributions are made in every region of Texas through its divisions and affiliations with 15 Texas universities, one community college and 35 multidisciplinary research centers.



**ERIC M. BOST**, U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, was named vice president for global initiatives at Texas A&M by the Board of Regents in January. Bost provides leadership for the university's international programs, including formal research agreements with more than 125 institutions in 45 countries; centers in Mexico, Italy and Costa Rica; study abroad programs that send more than 1,900 students to about 40

countries each year; and more than 4,400 international students enrolled at the College Station campus.



**CHRISTOPHER C. COLEND A** was named vice president for clinical affairs for the Texas A&M Health Science Center by the Board of Regents in March. Colenda also is the Jean and Thomas McMullin dean of the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine. As vice president, Colenda is responsible for the operations, planning and integration for all clinical activities under the umbrella of the Health Science Center. He also is responsible for creating and enhancing collaborative relationships with communities in which the Health Science Center employs physicians to model professional relationships across the practice spectrum.



**WILLAM A. DUGAS** was named interim director of Texas AgriLife Research by the Board of Regents in January. Dugas also serves as associate vice chancellor for agriculture and life sciences, and associate dean for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M. Dugas has been a top administrator for AgriLife Research since 2005, when he was named associate director for operations. He has been the agency's deputy director since 2007 and an interim associate dean for the college since 2008. AgriLife Research employs about 1,700 people, and conducts research at several system universities and at research and extension centers around the state.



**ELEANOR M. GREEN** was appointed dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences by the Board of Regents in December 2008. Green is the first woman to serve as dean. As dean, Green serves as the principal academic leader and chief executive officer of the college. She also is responsible for the management of six academic departments and the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. Previously, Green was professor and chair of the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida-Gainesville.



**MARK A. HUSSEY** was named vice chancellor and dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M by the Board of Regents in December 2008. As dean, Hussey leads one of the largest agricultural schools in the country. As vice chancellor, Hussey oversees Texas AgriLife Research, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, the Texas Forest Service and the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.



**ANDREW L. STRONG** was named general counsel for the A&M System by the Board of Regents in March. As general counsel, Strong is responsible for all legal matters affecting the system and provides legal counsel to the Board of Regents, chancellor and CEOs of the A&M System. The general counsel also serves as the liaison to the attorney general's office on litigation cases and matters involving AG opinions. Strong has extensive experience litigating and negotiating settlements to complex disputes at both the state and federal levels, and has worked with government entities, public universities and private clients.

# A&M System Goes Military Friendly

BY ROD DAVIS

**Throughout** The Texas A&M University System, universities and agencies continue efforts on a number of fronts to make it easier for veterans, active duty personnel and dependents to fulfill their goals in higher education.

In April, all nine system universities achieved full "military friendly" status as certified by the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, the nation's leading military-friendly monitoring organization. This fulfilled a primary goal set last November at a meeting at Fort Hood of the Mission Military Friendly Task Force, a select group of senior military officers and administrators invited by Chancellor Michael D. McKinney to guide the system's efforts to expand opportunities for the military.

The SOC designation, which extends to more than 1,700 schools, colleges and universities, indicates that the participating institutions have adopted various procedures making it easier for military personnel to enroll, transfer credits, find online resources, and obtain campus-level support such as veterans programs and academic counseling. It also helps prospective students find maximum use of benefits under the new GI Bill, which takes effect in August. Institutions also agree to adopt the Military Student Bill of Rights.

In becoming fully military-friendly, the A&M System "literally opens its doors to those who have served or are still serving in our armed forces," said McKinney. "We intend to be the educational system of choice for veterans, active duty personnel and their dependents. These folks make some of our best students, and our best students make Texas a better place."

Meanwhile, the Texas A&M Health Science Center,



**THE NEXT CHALLENGE** *Veterans and active duty personnel and their dependents headed for college will find special assistance and encouragement from A&M System universities and agencies.*

in cooperation with the Department of the Army, is exploring ways to increase the number of Army physicians seeking degrees through the HSC College of Medicine. In August, Army medical recruiters, trying to fill a shortfall of doctors, will be available during interviews of applicants in College Station. During the coming year, A&M System cooperation in filling military medical personnel shortages will expand from doctors to also include other fields such as nursing, dentistry and pharmacology.

And June 16-17, the A&M System, under the direction of Frank Ashley, vice chancellor for academic affairs, will host a symposium to explore better ways to bring veterans into universities and training programs. Details will be announced and posted on the system home page under "Veterans Benefits" ([www.tamus.edu](http://www.tamus.edu)) and on the "Academic Affairs" page (<http://www.tamus.edu/offices/academic/index.html>).



**REACHING OUT** *The A&M System's military-friendly initiative makes it easier for veterans, active duty military personnel and dependent families to realize their goals in higher education.*



## REGENT GETS SCHOOLED

When **Regent Bill Jones** took up an offer to "shadow" faculty members at Texas A&M University to get a better idea of their jobs last October, he probably didn't know it would lead him from planting experimental cultures in a College Station biology lab to testing the fertility levels of bulls in Huntsville. But he was game, first spending a day with **Deborah Bell-Pedersen**, professor of biology, and then a second day with **Dan Posey**, director of special programs at the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

"I was struck by the vast amount of technology available to students today compared to 1981, which was the last time I was in a classroom," Jones said. "For one thing, there weren't any computers in 1981. I was impressed with the knowledge and skill level, particularly of the veterinary medical students such as **Matt Moskosky** (pictured) and **Jennie Marvelle**. They performed their tasks very much like seasoned veterinarians." He also learned a lot more about the faculty and how hard they work than he knew before. "Dr. Bell-Pedersen asked me, 'What does the board do?'" Jones said. "I mistakenly assumed that everyone knew what we did. I learned a lot from her and I hope she learned something from me." He does suggest that if you want to know how to fertility-test a bull, ask him off-line.

# Power-hungry Pests: Raspberry Crazy Ants

BY MIKE JACKSON



The trail of ants didn't register with Tom Rasberry when he saw them crawling along a sidewalk at a chemical plant in Pasadena. He sprayed them with

insecticide and finished his work.

"I had never seen that particular ant before, but they didn't mean a whole lot to me the first time I saw them," said Rasberry, who's run a pest control business since 1929. "Their numbers weren't very high, so I didn't think much about them."

That was late summer 2002. "By the following year there were literally millions and millions of them," he said.

Now appropriately dubbed the Raspberry crazy ant, the exotic species has become synonymous with trouble. They don't sting like the notorious fire ant, but they can clog electrical systems and cause millions of dollars in damage.

"There was definitely a sense of urgency on my part," Rasberry said after reporting his discovery, "I felt like it was a species of ant that was going to cause our state some severe trouble."

Experts agree. "They went from one site to 11 counties in just a few years," said Dr. Roger Gold, who heads the Center for Urban Structural Entomology at Texas A&M University.

And they're not slowing down. Common over-the-counter insecticides don't work well against the exotic pests.

Apparently attracted to electrical equipment, the ants invade by the millions and can shut down anything from computer systems and communications networks to hospital databases and airport security control panels. Repairs could cost millions.

**More information:** For help identifying the Raspberry crazy ant and information about what to do about them, go to: <http://UrbanEntomology.tamu.edu> and <http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/topics/rasberrycrazyant>

They displace fire ants, but also attack such beneficial insects as ladybugs and honeybees, Gold said. And they prey on the offspring of songbirds and ground-dwelling fowl like the endangered Attwater Prairie Chicken.

"People were saying they'd rather have the fire ants than these little ants that invade their property at will," he said.

Gold and members of a Crazy Ant Task Force are running an educational campaign to inform people about the ants' presence and what to do about them. The task force includes representatives from Texas AgriLife Extension and Texas AgriLife Research, Texas A&M Department of Entomology, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas

Department of Transportation, Texas Parks Wildlife Department, Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, and Budget Pest Control of Houston.

"We're trying to raise awareness and keep people from spreading the ants," said Dr. Bart Drees, an entomologist with AgriLife Extension. "We also want to generate interest in research to develop effective control methods."

After discovering the ant, Rasberry sent a sample to Texas A&M entomologists, who determined that it appeared to be related to the Caribbean crazy ant, so named for the erratic way it crawls.

The ants were probably brought to Houston aboard a cargo ship traveling from the Caribbean, possibly St. Croix, according to Gold.

As of 2008, Raspberry crazy ants were found in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Orange, Walker, and Wharton counties, and they are expected to spread to other areas. Gold said they have been spread by people moving plants, sod, potting mixture, fire wood and other items between locations.

*Mike Jackson is a communications specialist with the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton.*

Raspberry crazy ants, you've had your 15 minutes of fame:

## Make Way For Zombie Fire Ants

Ever wish you could do something unspeakable to those pesky fire ants in your yard or field? How about turning them into zombies controlled by parasites?

Researchers with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are on it. Integrated pest management specialist Dr. Scott Ludwig of the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project recently conducted an experiment in which he released fire ants infected with a new type of phorid fly, a tiny parasite that only preys on red imported fire ants (native ant species needn't worry). "First they become zombies, their movements under the control of the parasite. Then their heads fall off and the parasite emerges," Ludwig says. The "zombified" fire ant then wanders about 55 yards away from the mound to die.

What to know more about fire ant zombification? Go to <http://fireants.tamu.edu/>



**WHITNEY BISCHOFF**, associate professor for Texas A&M International University's College of Nursing and Health Sciences, has been named the recipient of the Texas Organization of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education's Innovations in Teaching Award for 2008. TOBGN is dedicated to serving Texas by promoting standards of excellence in nursing education programs to facilitate high-quality healthcare. The award was based on Bischoff's submission "Culture in Nursing: Designing an Online Course to Encourage Collaboration and Enhance Learning."



**DON CAWTHON**, dean of the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences at Tarleton State University and resident director of the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Stephenville, was voted president of the American Association of State Colleges of Agriculture and Renewable Resources for 2008-2009. As president, Cawthon supervises meetings and directs matters concerning the association's business, is responsible for contact with other professional organizations and appoints members to fill vacant offices until the next annual meeting. AASCARR is composed of almost 50 state colleges and public non-land grant universities.



**NANCY W. DICKEY**, president of the Texas A&M Health Science Center and vice chancellor for health affairs for The Texas A&M University System, has been elected to the 2009 Board of Directors of The Academy of Medicine, Engineering and Science of Texas. TAMEST was founded in 2004 to provide broader recognition of the state's top achievers in medicine, engineering and science, and to build a stronger identity for Texas as an important destination and center of achievement in these fields. Dickey's three-year term began in January.



**VERGEL GAY**, associate vice chancellor of facilities planning and construction at the A&M System, has been named chair, for the second year in a row, of the Texas Society of Architects' Building Information Modeling Task Force. The task force's goal is to spread information on the use and application of Building Information Modeling by architects in the state of Texas.



**ARTHUR E. HERNANDEZ** became dean of the College of Education at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on March 1. As dean, he supervises academic, faculty and student affairs for the College of Education. He also oversees the Early Childhood Development Center, University Preparatory High School, Antonio E. Garcia Arts & Education Center, and the college's bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs.



**U.J. MCMAHAN** has been appointed professor and head of Texas A&M University's biology department. As head of biology, McMahan is responsible for the department's curriculum, faculty and program development. He also oversees its external relations as he works to obtain more financial support for research and the training of advanced undergraduate and graduate students. McMahan brings 31 years of experience from Stanford University, where he was professor of neurobiology and of structural biology with tenure in the School of Medicine.



**JEAN STUNTZ**, associate professor of history at West Texas A&M University, has been named president-elect of H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online, one of the largest interdisciplinary organizations of scholars in the world. Stuntz began her duties as president-elect on Jan. 1, which will be followed by a one-year term as president in 2010 and a final year as past president in 2011. She has served on H-Net's executive council for the past three years. During her term as president, Stuntz will travel extensively, attending numerous conferences as a representative of H-Net.

# "Historic" Agreement

Continued from Page 1

McKinney praised the PCCA and the area's leadership for not giving in to despair over closing of the Naval Station. To the contrary, he said, "You are taking control of your destiny. We are extraordinarily pleased that the PCCA and the folks in this region are going on this path-breaking journey with us. We are committed to the best future we can imagine, and a lot of the imagination is going to come from the commitment we have made today."

McKinney said that while the parameters of the research and commercial relocations that will come to the base are still being worked out, the system's plan will be in place before the station closes. Under the joint agreement, the system will receive a management fee of \$1.4 million from the PCCA for developing the project over the next four years. Future revenues generated from commercial clients who will set up research and training operations at the site will be shared under terms to be arranged.

Various system members will help in the development of the Ingleside project, including Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, and the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

Guy Diedrich, vice chancellor for federal relations and commercialization, said the venture "represents a new chapter for Ingleside and for the system." Diedrich and Dennis Beal, director of industry alliances for the system's Office of Technology Commercialization, led efforts to create the Ingleside project, working closely with Corpus Christi businessman Larry Urban and Tom Moore, project manager of Naval Station Ingleside Redevelopment.

After the signing of the agreement, representatives from the system and the PCCA hopped on a bus for a tour of NSI that included burgers in the base mess and inspection of facilities ranging from enlisted housing quarters to cavernous machine repair shops to special buildings for training firefighters.



**SIGN HERE** PCCA chair Ruben Bonilla and Chancellor Mike McKinney sign the Development Services Agreement creating a historic partnership between the PCCA and the Texas A&M System.

As the bus reached the deepwater port where aircraft carriers had once docked, only two minesweepers remained at the piers prior to departure in June. But the potential for future commercial shipping operations was obvious. So was the other resource that comes with the base.

"One thing about the Coastal Bend, there's no shortage of wind," McKinney said, ducking into a gust as the group walked along the far end of the pier. "This is the perfect place for our research."

# Bringing Medical Professionals to the Front Lines

BY JOSEPH GUINTO

**Reports of a potential pandemic** are unnerving. Then, word comes from a Houston hospital that the worst fears have been realized. A 23-month-old toddler from Mexico has succumbed to a severe case of the new strain of swine flu subsequently to be renamed H1N1. He is the first U.S. fatality.

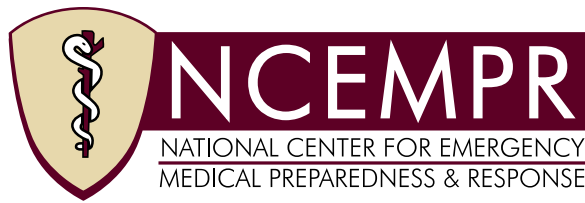
That's why Houston's top health officials have been on the phone since just past dawn with Dr. Scott Lillibridge, a research scientist and professor with the Texas A&M Health Science Center. But he also is director of The Texas A&M University System's new National Center for Emergency Medical Preparedness and Response, where his job is to assist local and state medical teams as they deal with major medical crises. That includes anything from new strains of the flu to the aftermath of a hurricane. Often all at once. Just as H1N1 flu fears spike, Houston also has been hit with torrential rains. "Not only do we have the swine flu here, but there is also severe flooding," Lillibridge says during a brief break between conference calls. "If there was a hurricane, too, that'd be a really full day."



**STRATEGIC PLANNING** Dr. Scott Lillibridge (left) leads a unique combined approach to train medical personnel to handle disasters and emergencies.

**That's gallows humor.** But it's not entirely a joke. As a former bioterrorism preparedness director at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Lillibridge has been called to the front lines in the aftermath of crises ranging from the Oklahoma City federal center bombing in 1995 to the 2001 anthrax attacks. Four months before the Texas A&M System Board of Regents formally established NCEMPR in January, Lillibridge and his team were already being deployed to assist the Texas Department of Health and Human Services in its response to Hurricane Ike.

Although already seeing action, NCEMPR remains a work-in-progress as it fully establishes itself over the next three years.



Ultimately, the \$5 million center will link the resources of the Texas A&M Health Science Center with the Texas Engineering Extension Service — which trains first responders — and the Texas Engineering Experiment Station — which conducts engineering research — giving the Texas A&M System arguably the most robust emergency response research and training facilities in the country. "This is unique because it will give Texas A&M the entire infrastructure of disaster response management in one place," Lillibridge says.

Helping victims of hurricanes and deadly viruses—or, potentially, casualties from bioterror attacks—is the stuff of high drama. But the heavy lifting for NCEMPR will take place in a seemingly more mundane setting. Instead of doctors and nurses and other medical responders rushing from one triage scene to another, think of those same people pouring over spreadsheets and computer screens and scribbling on note pads. "We don't coordinate response to medical emergencies. Most of what we do is in training, exercises, and other activities associated with medical preparedness," Lillibridge says.

**Disaster response** is about allocation of scarce resources, about moving the pieces around to where they're most needed, especially when there's a sudden surge of patients in one area. That's why NCEMPR's primary mission is to train medical staff to plan for emergencies before they happen, while also prepping them for the back-end, when the disasters hit. The training cycle looks at the experience as a whole, so that managing resources in advance of a surge scenario is fully integrated with hands-on experience under field conditions or in emergency rooms slammed with incoming casualties. So that more lives are saved in real time.

The need for the cross-training is widespread, especially in Texas. "Right now, many hospitals don't do the kinds of exercises that would prepare them to deal with these types of situations," says Harrison Lobdell, division director for TEEEX's National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center and deputy director of NCEMPR.

One of NCEMPR's priorities involves working with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center to develop the first Disaster Medical Assistance Teams in Texas. DMATs are similar to the rapid response teams sent to earthquake zones to dig survivors out of the rubble.

The future payoff to NCEMPR's approach can be readily seen through the lens of the recent past. As Hurricane Ike bore down on Galveston and Houston in 2008, Lillibridge and his NCEMPR team blanketed hospitals and nursing homes to make on-site assessments. They quickly calculated that officials had underestimated the number of evacuees with special medical needs—such as dialysis treatment or special antibiotics. Had NCEMPR field staff not crunched the numbers in time, the casualty count from the storm could have been much higher.

"What makes us different is that we're able to work at a classroom level, a campground level and a senior policy level," Lillibridge says. "And when we're not training or teaching, we're keeping ourselves 'field active,' so that we're ready to assist with any response to a disaster at any time."

*Joseph Guinto is a writer based in Washington, D.C.*

## A Curious Mind, a World-Class Scientist

Continued from Page 1



**TOUR GUIDE** Darwin Prockop enthusiastically describes his work to visitors at an open house at the Institute for Regenerative Medicine.

and stroke. This type of commercialization, or translational research, would become another hallmark of Prockop's career. Rendering practical applications from scientific discoveries, translational research leads to improved disease prevention and treatments, benefiting both researchers and the public.

Over the last 10 years, Prockop has focused on adult stem cells taken from bone marrow and their ability to hone in on damaged tissue and repair the injury. He and his research team also have found that these stem cells produce improvements in animal models for spinal cord injury, stroke and diabetes.

"This is an exciting field," Prockop says. "Thousands of patients are already being treated for almost any kind of disease you can think of: heart disease, diabetes, stroke, arthritis, intestinal diseases. There is talk about the ability of adult stem cells to improve or cure the condition of every disease we are faced with, and that is powerful."

Prockop's work attracted the attention of the Texas A&M Health Science Center, which recruited him to head their newly established Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Scott & White in Temple. Accepting their offer meant leaving the Tulane University Center for Gene Therapy, where he had served as director since its founding in 2000.

"I was sad to leave New Orleans. I tried to make it work for two years, but the city was just not coming back fast enough" he says, referring to the damage Hurricane Katrina inflicted on the city after it struck in August 2005. "We were working on stem trials there, but then one of the city's major hospitals closed and many doctors left the city."

Prockop and nearly one-third of his 75-member team at Tulane followed suit. Together, they set up a fully functional lab in Temple within a few months.

When Prockop took the helm of the Institute in August 2008, it was a shot in the arm for the HSC-College of Medicine translational research portfolio, which is aimed at taking more research from the bench to the bedside through clinical trials, patentable therapies and start-up companies. He and his team were a perfect fit.

"The opportunities for clinical translation with adult stem cell research are amazing," Prockop says. "When our bodies are faced with a disease, they work to fight it. But most of the time they just can't do enough so that's where stem cells come in. The idea is that you take stem cells from a patient, multiply them in the lab and then give them back to the patient. It sounds too simple to believe, but it works."

The observations made by Prockop and his research group provided the basis of the first successful test of the cells in children with severe brittle bone disease and dwarfism. The results have triggered trials with the cells that are now being carried out in patients with heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and several other diseases at leading medical centers in the United States and abroad.

More than 40 years after finally choosing a career path, Prockop hasn't wavered in his enthusiasm for his work. After settling in at Temple, he says he has been overwhelmed with the support he and his team have received from state and A&M System officials, the Texas A&M Health Science Center, Scott & White, and the people of Temple. "There couldn't be a better place in the whole country for us to be," he says.

*Summer Morgan is a former communications coordinator for the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine.*

## Making Space for a New Institute



The Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Scott & White received a \$5 million grant in February from the Texas Emerging Technology Fund to recruit leading scientists focused on regenerative medicine technologies.

"Commercialization of adult stem cell research will provide much-needed solutions for Texans suffering from various tissue and organ disorders while protecting the unborn from exploitation," Gov. Rick Perry said in making the announcement. "This investment will promote innovation and commercialization in this evolving biotechnology sector and attract top researchers and outside investment to the Institute for Regenerative Medicine."

The Institute has 40,000 square feet of research space, including 28,000 square feet of research laboratory space and a 6,000-square-foot clinical Good Manufacturing Procedures laboratory facility. The Institute also will provide academic programs for career development and job training, as well as serve as an engine of new scientist development for the state of Texas.

# Protecting Texas One Wildfire at a Time, All the Time

BY MISTY WILBURN

**By the time** the Texas Forest Service office in Fort Stockton got the call—4:26 on a Tuesday afternoon—the wildfire was raging through the Loma del Norte subdivision south of Alpine, more than an hour away. The local fire departments had been battling much of the day against long odds and high winds over rough terrain that made fire engines useless. Resources were stretched to the max. More than 100 acres had already been devoured, and now 50 houses lay in the fire's direct path.

Texas Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Bill Davis and wildland firefighter Ryan Born began loading up their equipment, including a heavy-duty bulldozer. Before hitting the road, Davis called in fixed-wing aircraft from Midland, Waco and Sweetwater to drop fire retardant. En route to Alpine, Davis monitored reports from the scene and realized that the situation was even worse than he had thought. They needed more—much more. The closest backup was in San Angelo, 272 miles away. Davis called Regional Fire Coordinator Shane Crimm. Within minutes, he organized a force of eight wildland firefighters and three more heavy-duty bulldozers ready to set out for Brewster County. It would take them four hours.



**ALWAYS ON CALL** Hours after containing the wildfire in Alpine, Bill Davis and his crew were called to Ector County to help fight another one.

Davis and Born got to the subdivision command center as the wildfire expanded to 317 acres, with no sign of slowing down. Within another hour it approached 600 acres.

Airplanes buzzed overhead, dropping thousands of gallons of water and retardant, a slimy red mixture that deprives the fire of oxygen. The bulldozers from San Angelo arrived and joined the one from Fort Stockton to scrape up mounds of dirt and rocks to break the fire's



**TAKING PRECAUTIONS** When necessary, the Texas Forest Service uses prescribed burns as a way to reduce hazardous fuels, prepare sites for seeding and planting, improve wildlife habitats or temporarily control competing vegetation.

access to flammable grass, trees and homes. It seemed to only make a dent.

By midnight, the only thing the arriving crews and exhausted local departments knew for sure was that the next day wouldn't be any easier. "I don't think this fire has done its worst yet," Born noted in a journal. "I just hope the crews can come out tomorrow morning rested and ready to get back out there."

Which is exactly what they are trained to do.

For the Texas Forest Service's 160 wildland firefighters, that means getting "back out there" anytime, anywhere, 365 days a year in a wildfire season that can stay active for months on end. As of May 18, 2009, TFS firefighters had responded to 675 wildfires that burned 329,691 acres since Jan. 22. More than 7,591 structures had been saved. In comparison, in 2008, TFS responded to 1,552 wildfires in a 210-day season that burned 1,013,397 acres.

The firefighters are part of the Forest Resource Protection division, which, along with the Forest Resource Development division, comprise the major arms of TFS. Created in 1998 under the Texas Wildfire Protection Plan, FRP consolidates the many aspects of wildfire control TFS has overseen since its inception in 1915. Also known as fire emergency and response, the FRP, headed by Mark Stanford, is divided into five broad departments: prevention and mitigation, predictive services, planning and preparedness, local capacity building, and incident response. Each day, a command center at the College Station headquarters monitors the state's communities-at-risk for wildfires (currently 14,506), handles reports of fires in progress or breaking out, and coordinates the field teams and incident command centers that are organized to respond to outbreaks anywhere in the state—such as in Alpine.

**The fire** showed no sign of abatement Wednesday morning. More planes—a total of seven now—raced back and forth, gathering information and dropping water and retardant. A Hot Shot crew from Asheville, N.C., arrived by midday, joined by Los Diablos, a special line crew from the Big Bend. The plan was to attack by air from the east side of the fire, and with the bulldozers from the north. The hand crews would get to the places no one else could. Everyone, as Born put it, would "hope Mother Nature plays along."

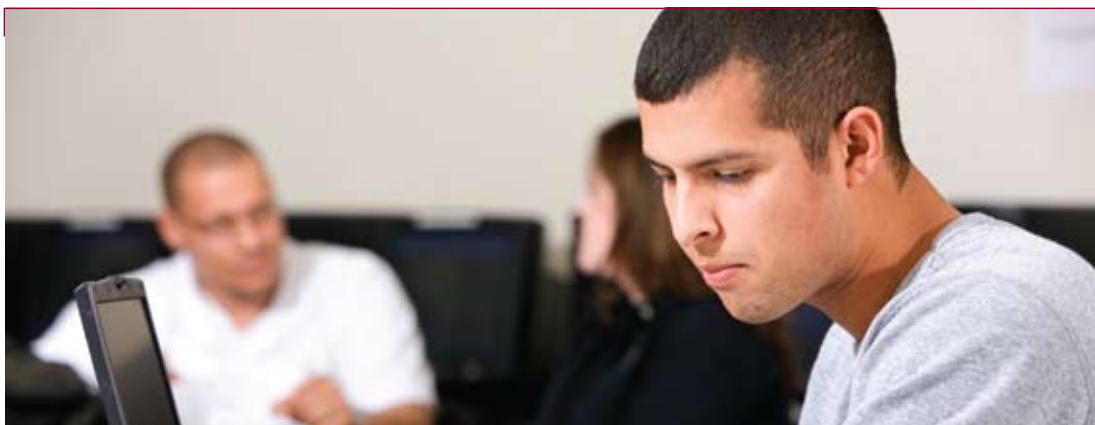
By 2 p.m., the blaze had spread to 800 acres, threatening 150 homes. Hope, amid the harsh, windy terrain, seemed more unlikely than ever. Then, reports from the front lines began to improve. By late afternoon, the fire had finally slowed. The plan had paid off.

Thursday morning, day three, dispatchers reported that the blaze was 50 percent contained. Not a single home had been lost, nor any lives.

"The crews out here on the ground and the aviation assets directly saved every one of those 150 homes that were threatened," Born said. "It makes you feel like all this hard work is worth it when you realize that you have had a direct hand in saving so much for so many people."

Not that a wildland firefighter gets much chance for reflection. At 3:24 p.m. the day the Alpine fire was dying out, the Fort Stockton office received an urgent call from Ector County, where a fast-moving blaze had already taken 400 acres. The field command decided to leave the Hot Shot and Los Diablos crews with the local crews in Alpine to be sure that the fire didn't spring back to life. Born and Davis and the other TFS fighters repacked their gear. They were headed for Ector County, already phoning in "air attacks" to drop critically needed retardant.

*Misty Wilburn is a communications and marketing specialist for the Texas Forest Service.*



**NEW STATUS** Students in Killeen and San Antonio now study at independent A&M System universities.

## Now We're Eleven

Killeen and San Antonio celebrate new university campuses

Texas A&M University-Central Texas and Texas A&M University-San Antonio are the newest independent universities in The Texas A&M University System, increasing the system's stand-alone campuses to 11. The latest additions topped enrollment benchmarks set by the Texas Legislature to qualify for independent status. Gov. Rick Perry signed the bill authorizing the universities in a special ceremony at the state Capitol May 27.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certified Tarleton State University System Center-Central Texas' spring 2009 enrollment at 1,204 full-time students in March, surpassing the 1,000 mark required by the legislature. In May, Texas A&M System Chancellor Michael D. McKinney and Army Secretary Pete Geren signed an agreement to transfer 662 acres from Fort Hood to the A&M System for the new A&M-Central Texas campus.

Texas A&M University-Kingsville System Center-San Antonio earned independent status when spring enrollment reached 1,059 full-time equivalent students. The Texas Legislature passed a bill in May to lower the full-time enrollment threshold from 1,500 to 1,000 and free up \$40 million in tuition revenue bonds to build the Texas A&M-San Antonio campus on the South Side of the city. The new campus will be located on 700 acres south of Loop 410 between Pleasanton Road and South Zarzamora Street.

—Amy Halbert

## Texas A&M Press Top 5 Books



*Building Leaders, Living Traditions: The Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University*

BY AMY L. BACON (FOREWORD BY JOHN K. KOLDUS III)

For more than 50 years, the Memorial Student Center has served as the "living room" of the Texas A&M campus. Here, alumna and former vice president for development of the MSC, Amy L. Bacon chronicles the transformation of the institution and its programs.



*Taming the Land: The Lost Postcards of the Texas High Plains*

BY JOHN MILLER MORRIS

Author John Miller Morris shares his personal collection of photo postcards of the Texas Panhandle, taken during the postcard craze of the early 1900s. In this work, Morris provides introductions to postcard photographers and in-depth descriptions of the people, places or events they depicted.



*The Sea of Galilee Boat*

BY SHELLEY WACHSMANN

Shelley Wachsmann, Meadows Professor of biblical archaeology in Texas A&M's nautical archaeology program, tells the behind-the-scenes story of his team's rescue excavation of a 2,000-year-old boat from the Sea of Galilee.



*What Can I Do with My Herbs? How to Grow, Use, and Enjoy These Versatile Plants*

BY JUDY BARRETT

Homegrown magazine editor and publisher Judy Barrett offers a primer on how to successfully grow and use 40 different types of herbs, in the kitchen and around the house.



*Insects of Texas: A Practical Guide*

BY DAVID H. KATTES

David H. Kattes helps readers classify and identify many of the millions of insect species found in Texas — from arachnids to hexapods. Photo keys, pronunciation guides, photographs and illustrated tables provide additional guidance.



# QUEST

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
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## New Regents Appointed

### New Chairman Selected

BY AMY HALBERT

**New appointees** Phil Adams of Bryan and Jim Schwertner of Austin join The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents following appointment by Gov. Rick Perry and approval by the Texas Legislature. Bill Jones, who served as chairman from July 2007 until May 2009, was reappointed to the nine-member board. The terms of all three new appointees expire Feb. 1, 2015.

Morris Foster was elected chairman of the board at the May Board of Regents meeting. James P. Wilson was elected vice chairman.

Adams is owner of the Phil Adams Company. He is a member of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, and serves on the board of directors of American Momentum Bank and

the Texas Public Policy Foundation. Adams received a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University in 1971. He replaces Erle Nye of Dallas.

Schwertner is president and CEO of Schwertner Farms Inc. He is chairman of Schwertner State Bank and the Seton Hospital, Williamson Foundation Board of Trustees, director of the Texas Beef Council and past chairman of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association. Schwertner received a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University in 1974. He replaces John White of Houston.

Jones is a partner at Vinson and Elkins LLP in Austin. He is a member of the American Bar Association, Texas Bar Association and State Bar of Texas. He also is a member of the Texas State Historical Museum Foundation and Memorial Hermann Healthcare System Community Care



Phil Adams

boards of directors. Jones received a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M in 1981 and a juris doctor from Baylor Law School in 1985.

In December, Governor Rick Perry appointed Richard Box of Austin to the board. Box serves on the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Buildings and Physical Plant. He also serves as the board's special liaison for the 12th Man Foundation and the executive committee of the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum.

Box is a doctor of dental surgery and has a private practice in the Austin area. He received a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M in 1961 and a doctorate of dental science from The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston in 1966. Box replaced the late J.L. Huffines of Dallas. His term expires February 1, 2013.

Hunter Bollman of Katy, who is in the Mays Business School Fellows Program at Texas A&M, has been appointed new student regent. He replaces Anthony Cullins.



Bill Jones



Morris Foster



Jim Schwertner

# QUEST



JUNE 2009 VOL. 1, ISSUE 4

## Stayin' Alive with Stump

The humble, 10-year-old Sussex Spaniel who stole the show and plenty of hearts at the Westminster Kennel Club in February wouldn't have gotten to be "Top Dog" without the help of the top veterinarians at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Who, as always, were more than glad to do their jobs.

Three years before his national triumph, **Stump** was almost down for the count with a seemingly devastating illness. In February 2006, his two Houston co-owners, **Cecelia Ruggles** and handler **Scott Sommer** (co-owner **Beth Dowd** is from North Carolina), decided on a last-chance visit to the Texas A&M Small

Animal Hospital. Stump was diagnosed with an extensive, body-wide infection. "He was very sick," said **Dr. Katherine Snyder**. "We treated him with antibiotic therapy, heart medications, oxygen, and some anticoagulant medicines." After 13 days, it paid off. "He pulled through like a real champ," Snyder said.

Sommer credited the Aggie veterinarians and staff not only for saving Stump's life, but for doing so despite the odds. To show his appreciation, Sommer brought the champ back to the vet school shortly after his unlikely victory in New York. But it was the triumph in College Station that may have mattered the most.



Westminster Kennel Club / Lisa Croft Elliott