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DENISON BUREAU totals were up a whopping 27.9% last month over the number of visitors served in March of last year. Bureau manager **Mike Harwell** said even though fewer permits and licenses were issued last month, the number of tourists who visited the bureau made up the difference. **Harwell** attributes the increase to the beautiful weather during the two-week "spring break." Orange bureau totals also were greater last month, up 16.9%, followed by the Capitol visitor center, +6.0%. A complete bureau-by-bureau tabulation follows the last item in the *Texas Travel Log*.

CONGRATULATIONS TO COUNSELORS **Reva Keltner** and **Mary Glatter**, 1984 winners of the Roadrunner Awards! **Keltner**, Gainesville tourist bureau counselor, and **Glatter**, manager of the Waco AAA office, were honored with Texas' highest travel-counseling award at the Texas Travel Counselors Conference held in Waco this month. Together, the counselors have given over 35 years of service to the traveling public. The award plaque carries a tongue-in-cheek Latin inscription that translates as "Getting paid for telling people where to go." But Director **Tom Taylor**, Travel & Info Division, said, "*The Roadrunner Award is a serious recognition of superiority in service to travelers to Texas.*"

DICK ROBERTS, associate editor for Travel & Info's travel literature, also was honored in Waco this month. **Roberts** received special thanks for his many years of audiovisual programming that gives travel counselors a look at the newest aspects of the Texas tourist industry. **Taylor** said **Robert's** presentations are regularly the most popular feature at the annual Travel Counselors Conference. **Roberts**, who coproduces a variety of audiovisual and printed tourist materials, has been associated with Texas tourism for more than 18 years.

YOU'RE INVITED TO HANNA BARBERA LAND! A happy place for family fun. Gates opened March 31, when Laredo bureau manager **Leo Garza** and Orange bureau manager **Bill Naivar** ran into each other at the grand opening. **Garza** said the colorful new family theme park is the only one of its kind in the nation. He added that much research was conducted before settl-

ing on the Houston area for the site. Famed cartoonists and owners **Bill Hanna** and **Joe Barbera** of California were on hand for the ceremonies, where they were named honorary Texans by **Governor White**. **Hanna** and **Barbera** are creators of such characters as Yogi Bear and Fred Flintstone. And the park's theme is designed around these cartoon favorites.

THE HANNA BARBERA CAROUSEL features cartoon characters instead of the traditional merry-go-round horses. And you'll see old friends like Scooby Doo, Barney Rubble and Captain Caveman in live shows, as passengers on the pedal boats, as marionettes in the Puppet Tree, and as live, strolling characters around the park. Hanna Barbera Land is designed to promote active participation and sharing among families with children ages 13 and under. It's open weekends until June, daily through August, then weekends again through November. It's in Spring, 22 miles north of downtown Houston at the Holzwarth Road exit on I-45.

ANOTHER NEW TEXAS ATTRACTION will open in June. Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch is a new drive-through wildlife park nestled in 200 acres of scenic Hill Country ranchland, just northeast of San Antonio. Owners **Raymond** and **Trudy Soechting** said a protected observation area has been built where visitors can leave their cars and watch giraffes, cape buffaloes, and zebras settling into their new home. Colorful and unusual birds, and monkeys, cougars, wallabies, and native Texas wildlife will be housed in a large gazebo-shaped cage. And there'll be a petting zoo where the young and young at heart can spend time petting and feeding young llamas, emus, ostriches, pigmy goats, Sicilian donkeys, and mouflan sheep. The Trading Post, will specialize in exotic and country souvenirs, and will have a snack bar with picnic tables provided under large oak trees. The Wildlife Ranch is next to Natural Bridge Caverns on FM 3009, 8 miles north of San Antonio off IH-35. For more info write Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch, Route 20 Box 515EN, San Antonio 78218. Or call (512) 438-7400.

THE GRAND PRAIRIE CHAMBER of Commerce will open a new visitors center the first of next month, to be staffed by minimum-income senior citizens. The Sheraton Safari Hotel on Safari Boulevard will donate office space for the center. And funds will be provided by the Senior Texans Employment Program. Director of business affairs, **Mimi Neely**, said the program will allow older workers to remain productive while supplementing their retirement income. And they'll be providing a real service to area visitors.

THE SAFARI BOULEVARD AREA is home to five of the six major attractions in Grand Prairie – International Wildlife Park, Wax Museum of the Southwest, Texas Sports Hall of Fame, the Fire Museum of Texas, and White Water. In addition to promoting the features of Grand Prairie, the center will provide information on nearby attractions such as Six Flags, Wet 'n Wild, and Sesame Place. A locator map will be posted and attendants will provide information on hotels and motels and services available in the area. The new visitor center will be open seven days a week during the spring and summer months.



STATE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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IT'S BEEN ONE YEAR since the Cowboy Artists of America Museum opened its doors. And since then, more than 40,000 visitors from every state and from 48 foreign countries have toured the Kerrville museum. Director **Griff Carnes** said, "With our new promotion program which is just now getting under way, we hope to double the number of visitors during our second year." The facility features work by contemporary, living Western artists, and includes a cottage and working studio where visiting artists can sculpt or paint. **Carnes** said the museum has been excellent for Kerrville's economy. "Our visitors have shopped in Kerrville, eaten in Kerrville, and stayed in Kerrville." The Cowboy Artists of America Museum is at 1550 Bandera Highway.

FOR A PEEK at some genuine petrified palmwood, our state's official stone, drop by the Laredo tourist bureau. Counselor **Becky Gutierrez** offered a visitor the *Texas Rocks & Fossils* folder when he expressed an interest in rockhounding. Seeing four varieties of the state stone in the folder sent him dashing off, soon to return with samples of the palmwood which he found on the highway stretch between Zapata and Eagle Pass. **Gutierrez** said the visitor presented the stones as a gift to the bureau so that others might have a chance to see what our state stone looks like.

TOPAZ, OUR STATE GEM, is featured in the upcoming edition of *Texas Highways* magazine. The June issue will take you to Mason County, home of the only two ranches that allow people to dig for topaz. "People still do find some pretty good topaz specimens," said editor **Frank Lively**. "We'll show you

how to hunt for the elusive stone." And Texas' Central Mineral Region is featured, which includes Mason County and its topaz.

THE JUNE ISSUE will trace the history of the Western saddle and show how it helped tame the Texas frontier. Then managing editor **Tommie Pinkard** will tell about Festival Hill near Round Top, a place where you can hear some outstanding classical music this summer in a beautiful rural setting. Take a picnic dinner and stay for a really delightful evening. The June issue of *Texas Highways* magazine will be available mid-May. Send \$1.50 to P. O. Box 5016, Austin 78763, or subscribe for just \$10 a year (\$15 for foreign addresses).

THE FIRST EDITION of the new *East Texas* magazine is now available. Waskom bureau manager **Milton Meharg** said the 60-page full-color magazine will be published quarterly by the *Marshall News Messenger*, and deals strictly with tourism promotion. "It not only spotlights attractions in the immediate area," said **Meharg**, "but features points of interest throughout all of East Texas." Publisher **George Smith** said public response already has been tremendous. "Our original modest goal of a 32-page magazine almost doubled... due to the faith the advertisers had in our ability to put out a quality product," said **Smith**. Featured in the first issue are Caddo Lake, antiquing in East Texas, Marshall's Old Courthouse Museum, and the steamboat *Mittie Stephens*. "Tourism is a definite plus in this area," said **Smith**. "We have lots of things to offer here, but no real take-home vehicle to show them off. Until *East Texas* magazine."

BOX SCORE - Overall visitor totals to the Texas Tourist Bureaus are down 5.6% from last year, with only three bureaus reporting increases in year-to-date totals over 1983. But mail and phone requests for Texas travel literature have increased dramatically over the last two months, up 8.8% in February and 23.7% in March. With folks planning their vacations early, this may indicate a busy summer season at our 12 bureaus.

Bureau	Month Total Visitors	Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Variation*	Bureau	Month Total Visitors	Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Variation*
Amarillo	11,337	-10.2%	26,700	- 4.7%	Orange	36,747	+16.9%	97,344	+ 9.1%
Anthony	24,141	-14.1%	64,035	-14.5%	Texarkana	21,930	-16.0%	54,354	-17.4%
Denison	17,820	+27.9%	42,501	+17.6%	Valley	38,397	- 0.4%	126,198	-13.8%
Gainesville	19,917	-11.6%	54,375	- 3.5%	Waskom	25,761	- 1.5%	60,921	- 3.4%
Langtry	11,694	- 7.6%	25,041	- 6.3%	Wichita Falls	12,462	- 6.1%	32,817	+ 1.7%
Laredo	18,936	-14.0%	49,572	- 5.6%	Bureau Totals	239,142	- 3.3%	633,858	- 5.6%
Capitol	44,109	+ 6.0%	93,468	- 1.6%	Austin Office (mail, phone, walk-ins)	13,717	+23.7%	29,324	+ 6.0%

*Compared to last year



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