



Published Quarterly for Members of the Texas Lone Star Chapter of SWANA

Interview with Christine Bergren

By Paul Gosselink

TXSWANA was recently given the opportunity to ask Christine Bergren the following questions about her new position with the TCEQ in order to help it's membership get to know her and perhaps learn a little bit about her regulatory philosophy and management style.



TXSWANA: Our readers are interested in getting to know more about you. Can you tell us a little bit about your family and your background?

Bergren: *I have lived in Texas all my life, but I often have a hard time answering the simple questions of "where are you from?" or "where did you grow up?" I've lived in many different parts of the state including the Gulf Coast, Central Texas, D/FW and many, many small towns in between. Moving so often was hard as a kid, but I realize now that it helped me to be very adaptive as an adult. Central Texas has been my home for most of my adult life. I went to school at Southwest Texas State in San Marcos where I met and my husband, John. We have one daughter, Shelby, who just graduated from High School and will be attending the University of North Texas this fall.*

TXSWANA: Please explain to the readers what your position was before you became the Manager of the MSW Permit Section?

Bergren: *Most recently, I was the Air Section Manager in the TCEQ San Antonio regional office. I have been very fortunate at the TCEQ that my leadership has encouraged me to be well rounded and to seek out and serve in a variety of agency positions. I've had the opportunity to work in several environmental media areas including air and waste as well as several program areas including compliance assistance, investigations and now in permits. This varied experience has given me a broad perspective on how agency operations are*

interrelated and how a particular action or decision in MSW Permits for example, may impact how an agency investigator is able to investigate the requirements of a permit or how our compliance and assistance programs are able to explain the action or decision to the person it impacts.

TXSWANA: What's the biggest change between your position as Air Section Manager for the Region in San Antonio and your new position as Manager of the MSW Permit Section in Austin?

Bergren: *Besides the obvious difference in looking at air issues and now looking at municipal solid waste issues, there is the type of work; I have moved from an investigation and enforcement role which is very much an after the fact position to more of a before the fact or thinking ahead role in permitting. The experience I gained out in the field about how difficult it can often be for companies to understand and comply with the terms of their permit and what an investigator has to consider in being able to enforce that permit has given me a good perspective when it comes to ensuring that we develop and issue permits that are rule based, understandable, reasonable and enforceable. Another key difference is being responsible for a program that is statewide instead of regional; 254 counties vs. 15 counties in Region 13. Also, the role that I have in working with the regulated community and elected officials on a statewide basis as opposed to a regional basis is also a significant difference*

TXSWANA: Has your new job been harder or easier than you expected, and is it more or less fun?

Bergren: *Yes to all of those questions! The position is very much what I expected it to be, challenging and very fast paced. Challenging because of the complex*

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Message from the President

By Brenda Haney

Howdy TxSWANA!

What an exciting time for our Chapter! The City of Garland just hosted a fantastic Annual Conference and the City of Denton hosted a world class Truck & Equipment Road -E-O. I had the pleasure of attending both events and they were terrific. The City of Garland brought us many new faces, new vendors and some truly terrific tours and technical sessions. They pioneered what I am sure will be a great new tradition for TxSWANA with the **Texas Finest Awards** – an opportunity for us to recognize some of the truly awesome programs and facilities that our members created and operate. On that note, I would like to personally congratulate our inaugural winners:

City of McAllen – Excellence in Composting

City of El Paso – Excellence in Landfill Design and Operations

City of Denton – Excellence in Special Waste Programming

City of College Station – Excellence in Public Education & Community Outreach

City of El Paso – Excellence in Integrated Solid Waste Systems



Great work all of you! I would also like to thank the committee that reviewed the applications – Robert “Holly” Holder – chair; Frank Pugsley, James Ballowe, & Mike Carleton – nicely done!

Congratulations to the City of Plano this year’s winner of the Jimmy Huff Safety Award for their efforts to achieve and maintain exceptional safety records.

This year’s Road-E-O was an outstanding event with participants from all across the state. The City of Denton extended great hospitality to everyone starting with a scavenger hunt for the family to the road-e-o to the water park and then wrapped it all up with an awesome banquet dinner with tons of entertainment. This year’s event also pioneered a new award – the “top gun” award that recognized the highest overall score of all contestants from every event in the categories of Truck, Landfill and Mechanic. Congratulations to this year’s winners: Chris Gonzalez – Truck; Bert Woods – Landfill and Ronnie Estes – Mechanic!

This year was also special because the TxSWANA Board recognized Vance Kemler, General Manager of Solid Waste Services – City of Denton with the Ken Smith Achievement Award. Vance has served TxSWANA since 1985 and has held every officer position – some more than once. He is currently a Director and our International Board Representative. Vance gives tirelessly to his organization, TxSWANA and the industry and on a personal level he has served as an exceptional role model to many of us – myself included – thanks Vance for all you have already done and all you continue to do!

And now a bittersweet moment – this is my last President’s Message – with this year’s elections my term is coming to a close and the past two years have flown past! It has been a great honor to lead an organization I have been a part of for years and an industry that I proudly work in. The solid waste industry has so many dedicated professionals that do so much for the growth and development of our business, to the advances of technology, to the everyday accomplishments – my sincere thanks to all of you for the work you do and the expertise you bring to TxSWANA. The chapter will be in great hands, your President Elect– Michael Rice, Director of Public Works – City of Amarillo. I look forward to serving under him as Past President and continuing to serve each one of you – our members, our future. You are a tremendous group and I thank you for allowing me the honor of being your President!

Brenda Haney

TxSWANA

Officers & Board of Directors

President:

Brenda A. Haney, P.E.
City of Irving
825 W. Irving Blvd.,
Irving, TX 75060
(972) 721-2349
bhaney@cityofirving.org

Vice President:

Michael G. Rice, P.E.
City of Amarillo
509 E 7th Avenue
Amarillo, TX 79105
(806) 378-9337
michael.rice@amarillo.gov

Treasurer:

Ellen A. Smyth, P.E.
City of El Paso
7968 San Paulo Drive
El Paso, TX 79907
(915) 621-6719
smythea@elpasotexas.gov

Secretary:

David W. McCary
City of San Antonio
4410 W. Piedras Drive
San Antonio, TX 78228
(210) 207-6471
david.mccary@sanantonio.gov

Past President:

Ron Smith
City of Dallas
3112 Canton Street, Suite 200
Dallas, TX 75226
(214) 670-3555
ron.smith@dallascityhall.com

IB Rep:

Vance Kemler
City of Denton
1527 Mayhill Road
Denton, TX 76208
(940) 349-8002
vance.kemler@cityofdenton.com

Director:

James Ballowe
University of Houston
4211 Elgin Street, Room 177A
Houston, TX 77204-1006
(713) 743-5686
jballowe@central.uh.edu

Director:

Lonnie Banks
City of Garland
1434 Commerce Street
Garland, TX 75040
(972) 205-3424
lbanks@ci.garland.tx.us

Director:

Hector Chavez
City of Eagle Pass
100 South Monroe Street
Eagle Pass, TX 78852
(830) 773-9408
hchavez@eaglepasstx.us

Director:

Paul Gosselink
Lloyd , Gosselink,
Rochelle & Townsend, P.C.
816 Congress Avenue, Suite 1900
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 322-5806
pgosselink@lglawfirm.com

Director:

Harry Hayes
City of Houston
611 Walker
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 837-9103
harry.hayes@cityofhouston.net

Director:

Bill R. Hindman P.E.
Chiang, Patel & Yerby, Inc.
1820 Regal Row, Suite 200
Dallas, TX 75235
(214) 638-0500
bhindman@cpvi.com

Director:

Robert H. "Holly" Holder, P. E.
Parkhill, Smith & Cooper
4222 85th Street
Lubbock, TX 79423
(806) 473-2200
hholder@team-psc.com

Director:

Richard McHale
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78767
(512) 974-4301
richard.mchale@ci.austin.tx.us

Director:

Lawrence Mikolajczyk
City of Corpus Christi
P.O. Box 9277
Corpus Christi, TX 78469
(361) 826-1966
lawm@cctexas.com

Director:

Mary Nix, P.E.
City of Dallas
3112 Canton Street, Suite 200
Dallas, TX 75226
(214) 670-3555
mary.nix@dallascityhall.com

Director:

Bengy Williams
City of Beaumont
4955 Lavin Road
Beaumont, TX 77704-3827
(409) 842-1483
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(Continued from page 1)

technical nature of the job coupled with the statewide responsibility. The answers in MSW are not always clear cut or black and white. On a daily basis we have to ensure that our decisions are based on what the rules require, sound engineering and good science sprinkled with a healthy dose of common sense. Fortunately, this decision making process is made easier because I am surrounded with and supported by extremely competent and capable staff. The staff in the MSW program are among the very best I have ever worked with at the TCEQ. As to the question of fun, yes, I am having a lot of fun and enjoying the job. Much of that enjoyment comes from the challenge but the other part of it is that I am exceedingly happy to be back working in municipal solid waste. My very first job out of college was working at the Texas Department of Health in the Bureau of Solid Waste Management. It is safe to say that MSW was my first love and I'm glad to be back. The other thing that I really enjoy about the job is our customers. When I first started in this position I saw a lot of the same faces that I was interacting with twenty years ago. On the one hand, that was surprising but it was also comforting in a way to know that some of the same people that I had very positive experiences with in the past were still going strong in the industry.

TXSWANA: What challenges do you foresee the MSW industry facing in the future, in the next five years, or even the next twenty years? How do you see the TCEQ meeting those challenges?

Bergren: *The biggest challenges that I see are being able to properly address the changes that we are seeing in how solid waste is being managed. On a large scale, many communities are moving away from a land based disposal focus to "Zero Waste" initiatives and more holistic approaches. The MSW Permits Section needs to*

ensure that communities and businesses who want to take this approach have a good choice of properly authorized facilities that can recycle, compost, etc. By properly authorized, I mean facilities that can accept a large variety of waste streams and manage them correctly without having a negative impact on the environment or the neighbors around the facility. That means that I have to ensure that staff and I are knowledgeable of the different processes; that we are able to assist the different entities that come in seeking authorization and that we can help communities and businesses make informed and knowledgeable decisions. Although we at TCEQ want to continue to support this shift to increased recycling and composting, we also must ensure that it is properly done.

TXSWANA: If you were not in your present position and could pursue any different trade or profession, what would it be?

Bergren: *Definitely and hands down I would love to be a professional fishing guide. I know that may seem like an unusual answer, but I absolutely love to fish. However, I have a weak spot and that is I am big on catch and release. I don't necessarily like to keep what I catch, but I sure do like the challenge of catching it. As a matter of fact, just a couple of weeks ago I was fishing in the Rockport area and caught a 4 1/2 foot alligator gar. It was the first one I'd ever caught and definitely one of the biggest battles I ever had bringing a fish in. I wasn't fishing for gar when I landed it and I really didn't have any of the right gear to bring it in, but I did. I guess that's a bit like life, isn't it? You don't always know what's going to hit your line and you're more than likely not going to be completely prepared, but you adjust on the fly and hopefully succeed and enjoy yourself in the process.*



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**2012 TXSWANA
Jack C. Carmichael, P.E.
Scholarship Winners**



During the last TxSWANA Board of Directors meeting in Austin, the TxSWANA Scholarship committee recommended, and the TxSWANA Board of Directors approved the following individuals for Scholarships. Congratulations to each !!!

[Drake Floyd](#)

*TxSWANA Sponsor-Steve Floyd
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Congratulations to Garland, Texas

Winner of the 2012 Jimmy Huff Safety Award





BACKING SAFETY

By Rusty Cockerham, City of Garland



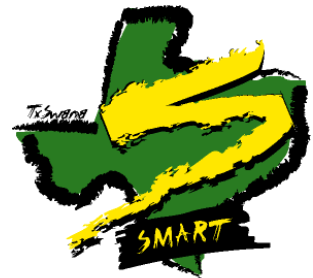
Backing any vehicle is no easy task. The challenges for safe backing are even greater for refuse drivers. The larger the truck, the larger the invisible area behind it, even with rearview mirrors properly adjusted. Mirrors can never give the whole picture while backing. Backing is challenging and hazardous because a driver will see stationary objects in his mirrors prior to backing, but as the truck is maneuvered in reverse, objects may suddenly disappear or enter the driver's blind spots. Moving objects complicate safe backing even more. No matter how careful a driver may be in checking behind his vehicle before backing, a moving object may also disappear from view or enter the truck's blind spots without being noticed. Here are some procedures your drivers can take to reduce the likelihood of having a backing accident:

- Avoid backing whenever you can.
 - When you park, try to park so you will be able to pull forward when you leave.
 - Always back as slowly as possible. That way you can easily correct any steering errors. You also can stop quickly if necessary.
 - Back to the driver's side so you can see better. If you back and turn toward the driver's side, you can watch the rear of your vehicle by looking out the side window. Use driver
- side backing even if it means going around the block to put your vehicle in this position. The added safety is worth it.
 - When you must back, get out and walk around your truck and make certain there is nothing behind. Then back immediately and watch carefully. If it is necessary to back some distance, stop part way, then get out and check your progress.
 - Use a helper when you can. There are blind spots you can't see. That's why a helper is important. The helper should stand near the back of your vehicle where you can see the helper. Before you begin backing, work out a set of hand signals that you both understand.
 - Use both rearview mirrors. You can't see the right side while hanging out the left door.
 - Never back around an intersection corner to turn around.
 - If you have to back in or out of a driveway, where possible, back into the driveway from the street so that you can drive out forward and see where you are going.
 - When backing over a sidewalk into a street, stop at the sidewalk to make especially certain that there is no child playing behind or close by. Stop again at the curb to make a last check on traffic before backing into the street.

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The Lone Star



2012 TxSWANA Ken Smith Achievement Award

The following is the Ken Smith Achievement Award recipient introduction , as presented by Brenda Haney (TxSWANA President) during the 2012 TxSWANA Annual Conference:

In 1999, the Lone Star Chapter Board of Directors of the Solid Waste Association of North America (TxSWANA) established an award to honor Ken Smith, an individual who contributed immensely to the Association, the Chapter, the solid waste industry, and environmental protection. Ken served in the United States Army for twenty (20) years, and as the Director of Sanitation Services for the City of Garland for twenty-six (26) years. retiring in 1994. Since then we have honored five individuals with this award: Glen Chambers (1999), Bill Hindman (2000), John Labrie (2001), Ulysses Ford (2002), and Pete Pistole (2003).

This year we honor a man who has served the solid waste industry in Tennessee, Florida and Texas. He has held progressively responsible operations and management positions in both the private and public sector of the solid waste industry including:

- Assistant Director of Public Works for the City of Galveston managing solid waste collection and transfer operations.
- Operations Manager, Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority, for solid waste operations.
- Director of Solid Waste Operations, Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority, managing hazardous and municipal solid waste operations.
- Director of Municipal Operations, Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority, managing municipal water, wastewater, and solid waste operations.
- Landfill General Manager, Waste Management Inc., managing various landfills in Tennessee and Florida.
- Superintendent of Solid Waste Services for the City of Lubbock managing landfills, recycling services, and refuse collections services.



He holds a BS in Zoology from Texas A&M University and has completed Post-graduate work in Biology at Sam Houston State University, Geology at University of Houston and Public Administration at University of Houston at Clear Lake.

He is currently on the Board of Directors of TxSWANA, is a Director on the International Board of Directors of SWANA, and has served in all of the officer positions of the Board of TxSWANA including as a Past President and has served TxSWANA since 1985.

He is currently responsible for the management of solid waste and recycling operations for a community here in north Texas. Since joining that City's leadership team in May of 2001, he and his staff have implemented a comprehensive solid waste management system that now offers variable rate residential; curbside collection of household hazardous waste and electronics; commercial recycling services to local businesses; developed a refuse collection service using carts and automated collection vehicles; curbside residential recyclables collection; a Landfill Gas-to-Energy project that produces electricity from landfill gas; incorporated new technology into the landfill operations; implemented a variety of alternative fuel and hybrid technology vehicles into the Department's fleet; and developed other environmental projects through partnerships with private industry and area universities.

He married his lovely wife, Judy in 1969 and she is here with us today. They have three children and six grandchildren, all living in Texas.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pride that I introduce to you a personal friend, my Mentor and the 2012 TxSWANA Ken Smith Achievement Award Winner:

Mr. Vance Kemler, the General Manager of Solid Waste and Recycling Services for the City of Denton.

TxSWANA's Finest Award Winners - 2012



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&

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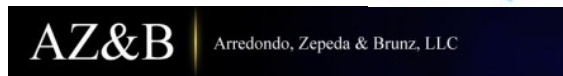
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1st Place—Stanley Flores, Denton

2nd Place—Richard Morehouse, CWD

3rd Place—Ivan Fernandez, Garland

REAR LOADER

1st Place—Tony Vann, New Braunfels

2nd Place—Mana“Chris” Hudson, Longview

3rd Place—Carl Guillery, Beaumont

AUTOMATED SIDE LOADER

1st Place—Oliver Brazier, Denton

2nd Place—Mario Garza, San Antonio

3rd Place—Jason Anderson, Beaumont

ROLL OFF

1st Place—Adrian Martin, Irving

2nd Place—Isah Bell, Houston

3rd Place—Ramon Garcia, Houston

RUBBER TIRE LOADER

1st Place—Brian Rushing, Denton

2nd Place—Larry Weese, El Paso

3rd Place—Mario Munoz, Dallas

DOZER

1st Place—Arturo Garcia, Denton

2nd Place—Roger Gilland, Beaumont

3rd Place—Carlos Lorenzo, El Paso

COMPACTOR

1st Place—Bert Woods, Denton

2nd Place—Juan Trivizo, El Paso

3rd Place—John Sargent, Dallas

TRACTOR TRAILER

1st Place—Chris Gonzalez, Austin

2nd Place—Raul Perez, San Antonio

3rd Place—Aaron Green, Austin

TRUCK MECHANIC

1st Place—Ronnie Estes, Plano

2nd Place—Gene Maines, Plano

3rd Place—Jonathon Matocha, New Braunfels

LANDFILL MECHANIC

1st Place—Mark Bartek, Denton

2nd Place—Mike Robicheaux, Dallas

ARTICULATED DUMP TRUCK

1st Place—Rodney Weyer, Denton

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Lora Hinchcliff	Living Earth	Wade M. Wheatley	Cook-Joyce Inc.
Ernesto Infante	University of Texas at Galveston	Alice Wong	Texas Reprocessing LLC
Calvin Jennings	City of Denton		

Calendar of Events

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS		2012 WASTECON Aug. 14-17, 2012 Washington, DC	
Aug. 15, 2012	Waste-Con	2012 International Road-E-O	Sept. 15, 2012
Sept. 14, 2012	Irving		Lexington, KY
Oct. 19, 2012	Houston	2013 TXSWANA Conference	April 2013
Nov. 16, 2012	El Paso		Lubbock, TX
		2013 WASTECON	Sept. 17-19, 2013
			Long Beach, CA