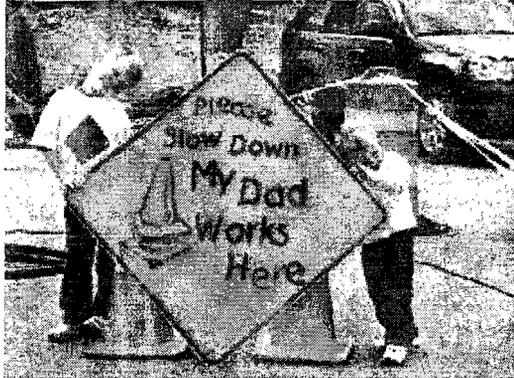


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DATE DISTRIBUTED 5/8/12 DATE OF ARTICLE 4/24/12 NEWSPAPER FWST

North Tarrant Express workers beg motorists to slow down, watch road - National Work Zone Safety Week



Earlier this year, a trio of workers on the \$2.5 billion North Tarrant Express project was out repairing signs at about 4 a.m. when a car driven by an older gentleman plowed into the back of the workers' pickup.

One of the workers was outside the pickup, so he missed the collision the morning of March 23 near Texas 183 and Industrial Boulevard in Euless. But the two workers inside the vehicle were bruised and cut - as was the older driver, who was hospitalized and his Honda was totaled.

"It could've been a lot worse," said Kyle Freeman, safety officer with Bluebonnet Contractors. "Our guys were both still wearing seat belts. But the guy in the passenger seat said he was a second away from taking his off."

Freeman and several dozen other contractors and Texas Department of Transportation employees gathered Tuesday at the newly-poured Murphy Drive/Westpark Way bridge over Texas 183 to call attention to National Work Zone Safety Week.

Thankfully, they said, there have been no worker fatalities in the North Tarrant Express project, or the LBJ Express project in Dallas. But, as Freeman illustrated, there have been more than a few close calls.

Excessive speeding, alcohol and distractions such as cellphones are the most common reasons why drivers crash in a work zone.

"Put everything down that could distract you, grip the steering wheel with both hands and pay attention to what's around you," said North Tarrant Express spokesman Robert Hinkle.

The speed limit in the North Tarrant Express corridor is 50 mph, and police are stepping up efforts to enforce it, said North Richland Hills police chief Jimmy Perdue. Traffic fines in the corridor, which includes Texas 121/183 and Northeast Loop 820, can be doubled in a work zone, he said.

He said traffic in the work zone "self-regulates during rush hour," when roads are so congested it's usually not possible for drivers to speed. So the real danger for workers, and motorists, is at night, he said.

@gdickson

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DATE DISTRIBUTED 5/8/12 DATE OF ARTICLE 4/25/12 NEWSPAPER FWST

U.S. Concrete to move headquarters to Euless

Posted Wednesday, Apr. 25, 2012

BY STEVE KASKOVICH

skaskovich@star-telegram.com

U.S. Concrete, a producer of ready-mix concrete and precast concrete products, will move its headquarters from Houston to Euless, becoming the only publicly traded company based in the Northeast Tarrant County city, officials said Wednesday.

The company already employs 250 workers at a regional headquarters for its Redi-Mix subsidiary at 331 N. Main St., which the city built for the company. U.S. Concrete is expected to add 45 professional-level jobs with the relocation, which is expected to be completed by July 1.

"Redi-Mix has been a crucial business partner with Euless for many years, and we are excited to see them expand," City Manager Gary McKamie said.

Bill Sandbrook, U.S. Concrete's chief executive, said that the company has no operations in the Houston area and that moving to the Redi-Mix site will help the headquarters staff "become more aligned and responsive to both our customers and operating companies' needs."

Sandbrook also cited available space at the Euless facility, financial incentives from the city and proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport as factors in the decision.

Euless put together a generous incentive package for Redi-Mix when it needed to expand several years ago.

The city built the regional headquarters, spending \$4.9 million for a 27,551-square-foot building on 2.2 acres. Redi-Mix occupies the building rent-free as long as it generates a certain level of sales tax revenue.

Under a 25-year agreement, a portion of sales taxes from regional concrete sales are rebated to the company.

To attract the corporate headquarters, Euless committed \$150,000 to help renovate the building and will give U.S. Concrete \$2,000 per new job, up to 45 jobs, city spokeswoman Betsy Deck said.

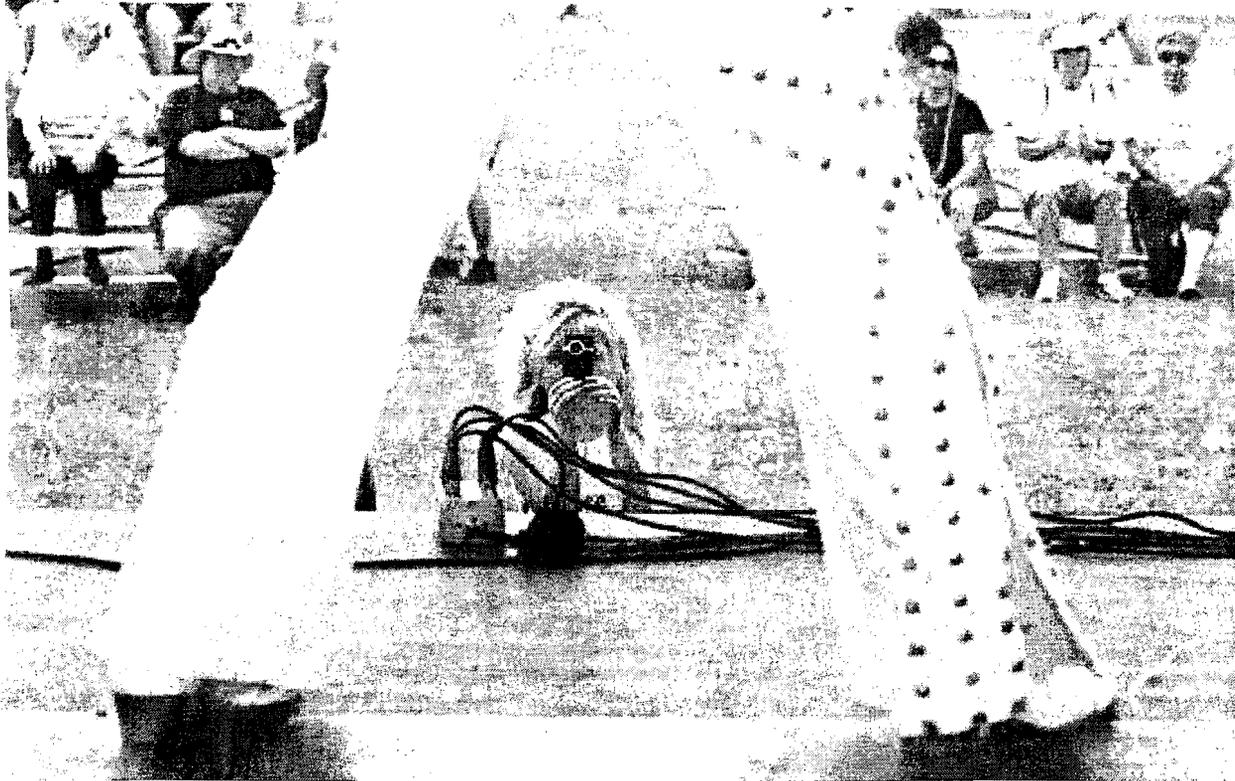
U.S. Concrete went through a Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization in 2010.

Steve Kaskovich, 817-390-7773

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Arbordaze 2012



Anika Robison, 5, videos Elvis during the city of Euless Arbordaze celebration Saturday morning April 28, 2012. Robinson's mother said that Anika and sister Avery developed an attraction from their grandmother who is a huge Elvis fan. Festivities included entertainment, arts and crafts, games and food. During the two day celebration 500 Red Oak seedlings will be given out. (Special to the Star-Telegram Bob Booth)

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Special to the Star-Telegram

Red Oak seedlings sit on a table waiting to be handed out during the city of Euless Arbordaze celebration Saturday morning April 28, 2012.

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Special to the Star-Telegram

Tyler Faulk of Cub Scout pack 546 gives Rochelle Drake and her grandson Aidan, 3, a Red Oak during the city of Euless Arbordaze celebration Saturday morning April 28, 2012.

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Twins, Tyler and Ryleigh Hanks, 10, paint a ceramic tile during the city of Euless Arbordaze celebration Saturday morning April 28, 2012.

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Special to the Star-Telegram

Oliver Kanoa Billington, 2, and his shirt enjoy an ice cream cone during the city of Eulees Arbordaze celebration Saturday morning April 28, 2012.

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Special to the Star-Telegram

Amanda Mendoza, 5, prepares to take the stage during the city of Euless Arbordaze celebration Saturday morning April 28, 2012.

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Local Elections

HURST -- The Metroplex Republican Women provided a potluck lunch of neatly assembled sandwiches, stuffed croissants and homemade tomato-basil soup while District 9's two state senate primary candidates -- Todd Smith of Euless and Kelly Hancock of North Richland Hills -- each worked to convince listeners that he was the purest conservative.

In many ways, the Republican candidates who want to succeed retiring Sen. Chris Harris are remarkably similar. Both were born in 1963, are smoothly polite and photogenic.

Both multiterm legislators are anti-abortion, Southern Baptist family men who have been representing Northeast Tarrant County communities in the Texas Legislature.

Both believe in creationism and like the idea of intelligent design being taught in public schools, and neither has embraced vouchers to defray costs of private academies.

Hancock, the owner of a chemical business, who was dressed in a blazer and open shirt, is shorter, thinner and has a folksier North Texas accent, although the pair grew up a few miles apart.

Smith, a personal injury lawyer in a trim black suit with tie, later told the Star-Telegram that he tries to speak like the late ABC news anchor Peter Jennings, a native Canadian. Smith lives in a 3,140-square-foot house appraised by the tax district at \$191,000; Hancock's is 3,770 square feet, valued at \$473,000.

Significantly, neither has joined Gov. Rick Perry's five-point, no-new-taxes pledge. Smith said: "I will not agree to something that ties me down before I get all the facts."

Before the governor endorsed him April 24, Hancock said he was still studying the pledge.

Neither would disclose his 2011 income when asked by the Star-Telegram. However, Smith said he would release 10 years of tax returns if Hancock did. Hancock's campaign said it's mulling the challenge.

Neither hopeful met the criteria of the Texas Eagle Forum to be considered among its "most conservative" lawmakers in the Legislature last year. The Young Republicans give Smith an overall career rating of 69 and Hancock an 83, while Texans for Fiscal Responsibility handed Hancock a "B+" for the 82nd Legislature and Smith a "C+," an improvement on his "F" from the previous session.

Smith took issue with the ratings, saying they skew a few votes on issues that are of importance only to a narrow perspective. He noted that the chief of Texans for Fiscal Responsibility was U.S. Rep. Ron Paul's former press aide and so could be considered more Libertarian than conservative Republican.

At the lectern, Hancock railed against Smith for wanting to raise the gasoline tax and said he demonstrated his willingness to take on the medical establishment, which he described as one of the strongest lobbies in Austin. Later, Smith said, "Kelly didn't mention that I was one of four joint sponsors of the bill."

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Regarding his own act of legislative courage, Smith told the Republican women that he had raised the ire of fellow personal injury attorneys by voting in favor of tort reform. And since he is an active lawyer in the field, the insurance lobby has never given him much in contributions, he said, and neither have his lawyer colleagues.

Smith has emphasized that he was raised with his sister in a cramped two-bedroom apartment complex off Airport Freeway by a single mother and is not the product of inherited wealth. Hancock's campaign declined to characterize the Hancock family's economic situation.

Smith said an academic scholarship enabled him to attend Southern Methodist University. He studied law at the University of Texas at Austin; Hancock has a bachelor's degree from Baylor University.

In November, the primary winner will confront Libertarian Dave "Mac" McElwee, 73, a retired schoolteacher and 24-year Navy veteran from Arlington, and Democrat Pete Martinez, 41, also of Arlington, who is a firefighter and builds wooden sheds, in the heavily Republican, double saddlebag-shaped constituency that includes chunks of Northeast Tarrant County and western Dallas County, along with a sliver of Denton County.

If the primary were decided by the gasoline tax issue alone, he'd lose, Smith told a reporter after the luncheon.

He said he raised the idea 11 years ago as a means to avoid toll roads operated by foreign companies. The situation has now changed, he said. The toll roads are here. And he said has long since abandoned the proposal, which would "prevent my constituents from being buried with toll roads."

"I am not supporting a gas tax increase now," he said, even though Hancock resurrects the issue to question his fiscal conservative bona fides. The Hancock campaign responded by saying that in a 2009 vote recommending killing the gas tax, Smith voted against it while Hancock voted to ask a conference committee to end it.

On Monday, The Dallas Morning News endorsed Smith for his legislative flexibility, particularly citing his support of a possible gas tax hike.

This prompted Hancock campaign spokesman Craig Murphy to assert that Smith changes his views depending on the audience.

Smith clarified his position, telling the Star-Telegram that he wouldn't want the tax raised during an economic downturn, but he'd keep options open so he can make a decision in his constituents' best interests.

Barry Shlachter, 817-390-7718

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Eules council Places 5 and 6 are contested

EULESS -- One councilman has a pair of challengers, while another incumbent faces a single opponent.

Jay Jenson, 69, and Bruce German, 59, both hope to unseat 73-year-old Glenn Porterfield, who has held Place 5 since 1999.

"Porterfield has been there more than 14 years," Jenson said. "You can make too many pals doing the same job over so many years."

Jenson said that if he's elected he'll propose a two-term limit be added to the city charter.

Lorren Britton, 62, also promised to support a two-term limit should he defeat 50-year-old Perry Bynum for Place 6.

"I don't believe any council representative should serve more than two terms," he said. "When they sit in office too long they tend to forget about the citizens."

But even more important is that Eules should elect its leaders from districts rather than at-large "so there is fair representation throughout the city," Britton said.

Early voting begins today for the May 12 elections.

Running for his third three-year term, Bynum said he's more concerned about the city's well-being and believes economic development is the most important issue.

"It allows us to keep taxes low," Bynum said. "We've been able to bring strong businesses into the city because the city is a great product."

He says the most important thing he has done to help with business growth is to be a good steward of city dollars.

Porterfield, seeking his fifth term, said his experience as a CPA and president of three banks before his retirement makes him uniquely qualified to oversee the city's spending.

"Our citizens deserve a council and city staff who look after their best interests," he said. "Keep the tax rates low, the cost of services as low as possible and provide the services needed for our citizens, as well as new and improved services that haven't been available."

German cited his experience as owner of a salon and spa business in Colleyville as his qualification to represent the people.

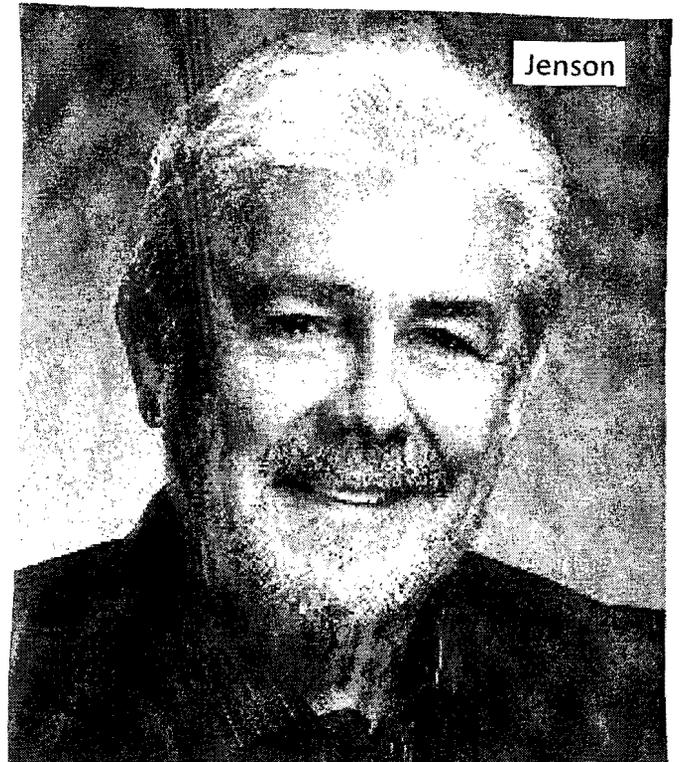
"The most important thing in Eules are the citizens and voters," he said. "Win, lose or draw, I want to increase voter turnout. If we can increase the turnout and citizen involvement, the city of Eules is the winner in the long run."

Terry Evans, 817-390-7620

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German



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Two Legislators Strive to Out-Conservative Each Other for a State Senate Seat

By AMAN BATHEJA

Published: May 3, 2012

Three years ago, State Representatives Todd Smith and Kelly Hancock, both Republicans, were on opposite sides of a fight over how to dig the Dallas-Fort Worth area out of gridlock.

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Now, as the two men vie for a rare open state Senate seat covering portions of Tarrant and Dallas Counties, that disagreement has hardened into a key philosophical divide that supporters on both sides say paints their candidate as the true conservative in the primary race.

Both men have longstanding ties to their districts. Mr. Smith, of Euless, cut his teeth serving on his hometown City Council before advancing to the House in 1996. Mr. Hancock, of North Richland Hills, was elected to the House a decade later, after 13 years on the Birdville school board.

Both hope to succeed Senator Chris Harris, Republican of Arlington, who is retiring after 21 years in the upper chamber. The winner of the primary in District 9, which leans Republican, will face Pete Martinez, a Democrat, and Dave McElwee, a Libertarian, in the general election in November.

“You’ve got two experienced campaigners with a following and the ability to raise money,” said District Clerk Tom Wilder of Tarrant County, a Republican. “It’s just a shame they decided to run against each other. They’re both pretty conservative people.”

In 2009, Mr. Smith supported the Texas Local Option Transportation Act bill, which would have given some urban counties the option to ask voters to approve raising local taxes or fees to pay for new transportation projects. The measure failed amid opposition from antitax groups.

Years ago, Mr. Smith differentiated himself from other Republicans, including Mr. Hancock, when he proposed increasing the gas tax to keep pace more effectively with the state’s

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transportation needs. He frames both stances as proof of his courage to make tough decisions despite the political costs.

“It’s always a can that can be endlessly kicked down the road, at least past the next election, and there’s always another election,” Mr. Smith said. “I feel a moral responsibility to propose real solutions to these problems.”

Mr. Smith said he no longer supports an increase in the gas tax because the area is now covered in toll road projects, and increasing the gas tax would be like taxing his constituents twice.

Mr. Hancock opposed the local option measure, drawing rebukes from some area officials, but he received praise from statewide conservative groups.

That same dynamic is emerging in the primary race, as conservative leaders including Gov. Rick Perry and Attorney General Greg Abbott are backing Mr. Hancock. Meanwhile, Mr. Smith has drawn support from dozens of local school board and city officials, including 12 mayors representing nearly the entire district.

Mr. Hancock dismissed Mr. Smith’s backers as not representative of the district’s voters.

“There’s obviously a connection with those who were looking to raise taxes with some of his endorsements,” Mr. Hancock said.

At a forum at a Grand Prairie church last month, the back-and-forth between the two candidates largely pivoted on how Texas should finance big-ticket needs like transportation.

Mr. Hancock said there is a reason he has received endorsements from the Texas Association of Business and major grass-roots conservative groups.

“There is a belief of mine that government needs to be run much more like a business,” he said.

Mr. Smith said that he did not support raising taxes during a recession but that the state needs lawmakers who have the will to invest a future surplus in infrastructure rather than in tax cuts.

“I am a conservative, but I am not someone who takes instructions from anyone else other than my own conscience,” Mr. Smith said.

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The last word came from Mr. Hancock, who encouraged attendees to research both candidates online.

“I hope that you will become informed,” he said. “Find out that there are different definitions of conservative.”

abatheja@texastribune.org