



Texas Ramp Project Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

This column is starting out on my new laptop, which seems to disagree with me occasionally so please accept my apologies for this fractious instrument!

I would first like to encourage all of you to record your builds promptly. The more current you are, the better the information that we can use to help raise more funds to offset the rapidly increasing lumber costs we are facing. Plywood had been \$30–\$35 per sheet for a long time, but now it is \$60 or more per sheet! We may see some fallback from that level, but it won't be soon.

As a way of combatting these rising costs, we may need to consider recouping the lumber from ramps that are no longer needed. Additionally, we will need to cut back on our builds in some areas where budgets are being exceeded. Before we start setting quotas, I would ask each build team to limit the linear feet of ramps you build to 50 feet per month for the next two months to try and conserve our treasury.

That could be one large ramp or two medium-sized ramps. We cannot keep building at previous levels in most places. Of course, raising funds locally will greatly assist us, and those funds that you raise will be held for your region as were all donations in the past.

I believe that we need to look at each region individually and decide upon a spending plan for each, taking into account a reasonable forecast of cash inflow for the region and availability of cash from statewide. The regional coordinators and team leaders need to be aware and in agreement. Our financial position is precarious but manageable if we actually do manage.

This is a very serious issue for the TRP, and the sooner we address it the better. Please let me know your thoughts.

Thanks, John

John Laine,
Executive Director

Meet TRP Board Member: Garner McNett

They call him the great organizer. The Texas Ramp Project has a lot of loose ends, and Garner McNett is the person to tie them up.

Garner has been involved with TRP since 2010, first as a builder and soon thereafter as a member of the board of directors. In January 2017, he accepted the role of board president, believing that he could apply some of his business and organizational skills to the Project.

As president, Garner has guided the board through the enormous growth spurt TRP has taken in the past several years. TRP incorporated in 2006 with a budget of less than \$100,000. Since 2015 TRP has scored over \$1 million in revenue every year (with one exception, due to accrual accounting). In other words, TRP has moved into the big time for a nonprofit, and luckily Garner's skills and experience were a great fit.

Lately, Garner has been working on a project to leverage \$10,000 of free Google ads per month to help increase donations. He is also working with the board's technology committee to maximize TRP's usage of the Salesforce database for more than just tracking builds. His focus is using Salesforce to launch and maintain a significant fundraising effort. As he says, "We have a great asset; now we must learn to use it."

Garner spent 17 years in sales, marketing and executive positions with Mobil Chemical and lived in Switzerland, Cyprus and Puerto Rico before landing in Dallas in 1980. Since then he has worked as vice president of Aviation Logistics International at DFW Airport and owned a pair of businesses, most recently Cargo Data Management Corp., which developed software for the air cargo industry.

Born and raised in the Boston area, Garner earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Clarkson University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He served as a first lieutenant in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Garner and his wife, Louise, have a grown son and daughter and three grandchildren, ages 15 to 17, in Montgomery, Texas, and Portland, Oregon. When he has time, Garner enjoys gardening, travel, reading, history and working with computers. A long-time member of King of Glory Church in Dallas, he has served as council president and on numerous committees.

"The Texas Ramp Project is a very special organization, filled with extraordinarily kind and giving people," Garner says. "With a little bit of effort, we can deliver individual freedom and change our clients' lives. What a wonderful opportunity for each of us."



Building Basics: How to's from Surveying to Reporting

The focus of this column this month and in future months will be to provide guidance for surveying, designing and ramp building based on ADA guidelines and years of field experience by several seasoned TRP team members. The processes presented will not be comprehensive but are intended to cover most of the questions that need to be asked and tasks to be completed through the survey and design as well as at least one way to approach the building and final assembly of our modular ramps.

Our hope is that surveyors and build team members may learn something new and/or provide lessons learned, improved processes or even documentation that may help others. Please send any questions, suggestions or other feedback to Roy Harrington at: royh85@verizon.net. We will publish any feedback we receive in future issues of the newsletter and use it to continuously improve the documentation and training we have available for getting new teams up and running across the state.

The following is an excerpt from the full surveying document. To see possible ramp layouts and other survey information, be sure to click on the following link: [Ramp Survey and Design Guidelines](#).

Ramp Survey and Design Guidelines

Rev. 5/2/2021

This document is for information only to assist TRP surveyors and team leaders evaluate possible ramp locations, lay out a safe ramp, and collect the needed database information. Survey tools:

- Camera/Smartphone
- 25' or longer measuring tape
- Laser level and/or string and bubble level
- Survey checklist and paper for drawing the site and proposed ramp (an example survey form is available at the end of this document)

Process:

1. If possible, contact client and arrange a time for the survey. Unscheduled visits can also be made, particularly if unable to make phone contact using referral information.
2. Take note of any issues locating the home and any identifying features to help the build team reach the correct site.
3. Discuss ramp need with client and any specific requests or concerns.
4. Critical questions for client:
 - a. Does client own home? If not, then owner/landlord must approve of the ramp design and installation.
 - b. Any HOA/community requirements, i.e., skirting, balusters, design approval, etc.
 - c. Which door does the client want to use and where do they need the ramp to end, i.e., sidewalk, driveway, etc.? Try to accommodate the client's requests; however, don't hesitate to consider other doors or ending points in order to provide safe access.
 - d. What issues have they had getting into and out of the home? Pay particular attention to the threshold and ramp ending location (sidewalk, driveway, etc.).
 - e. Best contact number for the build team to use when scheduling.
5. Evaluate the threshold, which may require a short, 4' or less, mini-ramp to provide an accessible path through the door.

6. Find the best landing point to meet the client needs, preferably onto a paved surface.
7. The length of the ramp is determined by the height from the ramp beginning point (door, porch, etc.) to the ending point. Using a string level or laser at the starting point, stand at the estimated ramp ending point and measure the vertical drop in inches from level. This will be the number of feet of ramp slope required. In some sloping yards it may be best to do a U-turn ramp that returns to near the starting point.
8. Using standard 4'x8', 4'x4' and 5'x5' modules as much as possible, determine if there is at least one way to provide the needed slope in the space available.
 - a. Clearly explain any layout options with client and get their approval or refusal of the proposed ramp.
 - b. As the surveyor, you are authorized to refuse to build an unsafe ramp or if there is not a financial need.
9. General design requirements
 - a. Each inch of drop from porch to ground will require 1 foot of sloped ramp.
 - b. 5'x5' minimum flat area required at door and all 90 degree turns.
 - c. 30' maximum slope run before a flat turn or ending point or 4' flat rest area is required. For our modular design, that usually means no more than 3 standard modules or 24' before a turn or other flat resting area.
 - d. Ramp cannot extend over, or in any way, block a public sidewalk.
 - e. Ramp width can be reduced to a minimum of 36", if necessary, to work around obstacles.
10. Take pictures and measurements of the area where ramp will be built, taking care to note obstacles such as trees, sewer cleanouts, meters, faucets, etc.
11. Get agreement from client before planning for removal or repositioning of any movable obstacles or other items.
12. Other information needed
 - a. Location of power source
 - b. Shade conditions at the site
 - c. Will any digging be required?

Ramp description examples:

From the survey notes and pictures, create a ramp survey description using these examples as a guide:

- Come off the existing porch, over the steps with a standard 4x8 sloping module continuing with another standard 4x8 and complete the ramp with a starter module.
- Come off the porch, over the steps with a standard 4x8 module sloping down to turn left (facing the house) on a flat 5x5. Continue with a standard 4x8 and a starter to end at the driveway.
- Remove existing landing and steps. Install 5x5 flat at door. Continue toward back of home with a sloping standard 4x8 and 4x4 to a flat 4x8 U-turn. Continue toward the drive with a sloping 4x8, another 4x8, then a 4x4 flat resting point. Complete the ramp with a sloping 4x8 and standard starter.



Texas Ramp Project: No Limit to Our Story through Social Media

By Madison Lopez, Social Media Editor

As we are all learning, social media is a powerful tool, and we want to harness it for the power of good. TRP is working toward incorporating our social media presence with our fundraising efforts. Currently, TRP best utilizes social media to stay in touch with volunteers, give updates, and help TRP folks get connected.

Our following has increased, and the engagement on our social media content has proven that the early stages of our social media presence have been a wonderful success. However, we believe technology and social media provide an opportunity to do even more. They provide a unique opportunity to reach the generous Texas community, showcase the good work TRP accomplishes, and build a greater fundraising base to sustain our volunteer efforts.

Over the course of the next few months, you will begin to see on social media information about how simple it can be to access TRP's website through social media and on your mobile device. Additionally, in the next few months you will see TRP social media bringing attention to a streamlined giving process. More news to come! Exciting things are on the way for TRP technology and social media. Join us on this journey by giving us a follow!

Check out this month's social media feature! Young men from Dallas Jesuit work with TRP, making a difference in their community and sharing amazing photos while doing it. Go Jesuit! We are so thankful for your time and commitment to service.

Give them a follow on Instagram! [@jesuitserves](https://www.instagram.com/jesuitserves)





Keep sharing your fun TRP pictures, so our new-found social media momentum continues to grow in 2021. Tell your friends to follow us on social media here:

Instagram:
@tx_ramp_project

Facebook:
Facebook.com/texasmamps

Twitter:
@TexasRamps

LinkedIn:
Texas Ramp Project

Remember to Sign Up for AmazonSmile:

AmazonSmile is a way for customers to support their favorite charitable organization every time they shop with Amazon.

Shoppers who start at smile.amazon.com will find the same Amazon they know and love, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the price of eligible purchases to the charity of your choice.

Signing up is easy. Use the following link to sign up with AmazonSmile so a percentage of your Amazon purchases goes to the Texas Ramp Project.

<https://blog.aboutamazon.com/community/how-to-sign-up-for-amazonsmile>

Regional Spotlight: Rob Newman, San Angelo Regional Coordinator

For a new guy, Rob Newman learns quickly. He contacted John Laine about 18 months ago, with an interest in becoming a team leader. John told him we really need an area coordinator in San Angelo, and almost before he knew it, he was.

“It was a steep ask,” says Rob. “I didn’t know the difference between nominal and actual widths of lumber.” But everyone in the organization was willing to help him. He even picked up good advice on a tour of the Austin Central warehouse.

Last year Rob’s teams built 10 ramps in the San Angelo region—the same number that had been built in the previous three years combined. This year the region has already reported 16 ramps. Plus, Rob has procured a donated warehouse, set up a collaboration with the Galilee Community Development Corporation to purchase ramp materials, and raised over \$3,000 in local funding. He plans to build 45 ramps in 2021.

Rob is a trooper with the Texas Highway Patrol, assigned to San Angelo. He lives in San Angelo with his wife of 17 years, Mindy, and daughter, Aadi, 14 (or, as Rob says, somewhere between 4 and 24, depending on her mood). Rob and his family are very much at home in San Angelo and plan to stay there.

Rob attended Texas Tech and served in the U.S. Navy, including time in Afghanistan. He enjoys camping and barbecuing. He and Mindy are huge fans of New Zealand’s All Blacks men’s national rugby union team. They hope someday to go to New Zealand to see the team play in person.

What draws Rob to TRP? The ability to make an enduring impact in the lives of others and do so while working with others. “I know when we leave, we are leaving that person with the means to keep their independence,” Rob says. “We leave them and their loved ones with the peace of mind knowing they can safely come and go. That’s freedom. That’s quality of life.

“It is a joy to help give people that. It keeps me coming back. It’s what drives us all.”



Grants Received

Speaking of grants, San Angelo emerged a winner last month. The San Angelo Health Foundation has awarded the San Angelo region \$15,000 to build ramps. TRP has also received approval of a \$12,000 grant from the Mary Ellen Kent Bunyard Foundation. Way to go, San Angelo!

Other recent grants and donations include:

- \$20,000 for Austin South (Hays County) from The Burdine Johnson Foundation.
- \$15,000 for Austin Central and North from the Hammill Foundation.
- \$12,500 for Dallas from the Harry J. Bass, Jr. Foundation.
- \$5,000 for Hunt and Kaufman counties from Farmers Electric Charitable Foundation.
- \$5,000 for Hunt County from the Golden K Kiwanis, Greenville.
- \$5,000 for Abilene from the Greathouse Foundation.
- \$4,400 for East Texas Emory from Broad St Church of Christ, Mineola.
- \$1,500 for Texoma from the Cooke County United Way.
- \$1,500 for San Antonio from H-E-B.

Exceptional Publicity from Greenville Golden Kiwanis

Covid was a real disaster for lots of folks, and GGK was no exception. Our meeting place closed down, so we had no meetings for 5.5 months. Since membership is in that age group most negatively affected by the disease, most of our members hunkered down in our foxholes and waited for an all-clear. We started with some virtual meetings and resumed physical meetings (twice monthly) at an interim location in September of last year. Covid cancelled all the summer programs we normally worked, so we stayed dormant. We are now back to meeting every week.

The one exception was the brave souls on our Ramp Team. After a one-month suspension of operations by the Texas Ramp Project, our team got the go-ahead to resume work and they did, finishing 20 ramps by the end of our Kiwanis (K) 19/20 year (30 Sep 2020). Despite Covid and some serious weather issues, they have continued their stellar performance during the first 7 months of K 20/21 year (1 Oct to date - see link below) with 19 ramps as of EOM April 2021.

The cost of lumber has become a serious issue as in a one-month time frame (as shown in the chart in the second link below), current funding can only finance the building of one-half as many ramps as previously expected, and the situation will probably get worse. We are frantically looking for ways to get more funds to build ramps for folks that desperately need and can't pay for a ramp. To see a plethora of their builds, go to:

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOXIDzKKoTe9Ls3SDVcRZVdc4b2X_vXAzigK5VUZlcZrYYNwojXgm_Od0966Jsagg?key=Nm9laUx4b1JTVU11cE5oN3FmM3VxeGU5aFpyQVhB

Ramp of the Month: Austin South Region, Hays County

Mr. Robert G., a 68-year-old man who has had three strokes and is extremely disabled, needed a ramp because his home has several concrete steps with no railing. This made it extremely difficult and totally unsafe for Robert to enter and exit his home. Robert's new 24-foot ramp was built by four volunteers from the Texas State Medical Explorers group, along with the San Marcos Warehouse #2 team. The referral for this ramp was from Seton Healthcare.



Robert trying out his new ramp.

DO: Please Pass the Newsletter On

We hope you enjoy having the newsletter sent to you directly, as it is filled with useful information, building hints and tips, data collection updates and processes, client stories, special announcements and recognitions.

The newsletter only does its job when it is dispersed and shared with all who might be interested. We encourage you to liberally pass it on to others in your region. Also, do send email addresses of people in your region who should be receiving it, along with their name and TRP region, to Sandy Knutson at sjkbits@aol.com.

If you prefer to **not** receive the newsletter, you can unsubscribe by emailing sjkbits@aol.com and asking for your name to be removed.

