

CHECK OUT OUR LIBRARY

The TCEQ library is a valuable resource

Chuck Stokes admits that when it comes to using the Internet for research, he's a bit behind the curve. "I'm old school," he said. "You can look at a screen all day, but there is no substitute for a book."

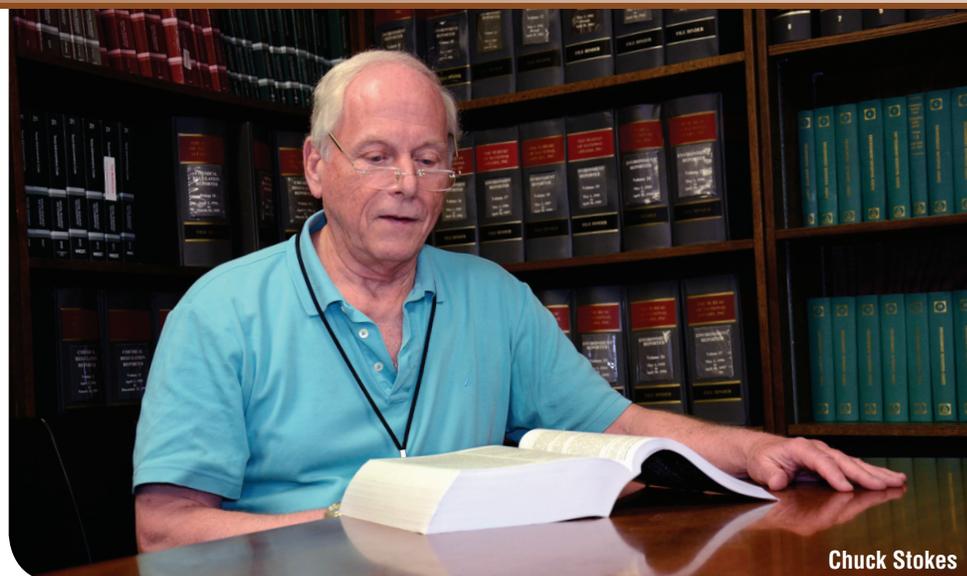
So when the TCEQ attorney needs to get up to date on attorney general opinions or case law, or look for law annotations—something not readily available via computer—he heads to one of the largest state agency libraries in Texas, located just a few yards from his office, on the TCEQ campus, in north Austin.

A History of Service

Visitors to the library are often amazed at the wealth of materials available. Rows and rows of shelves hold 65,000 books and 250 journal titles. "The emphasis at our library is almost exclusively environmental materials," said TCEQ Head Librarian Vonda Todd.

The history of the TCEQ library dates back to 1966, when the Texas Water Development Board hired a professional librarian to build a concentrated database of water resources.

"The collection, at that time, was confined to fields of science as related to water resources, their uses and problems, with an emphasis on Texas," said Todd. "In addition to serving the staff of the TWDB and related agencies, the library also made its resources available to all interested citizens."



Chuck Stokes

Not Your Neighborhood Library

While the TCEQ library looks much like any other facility that holds a large number of books, there are several notable differences between it and a public library. Here, there are no library cards, or children's books, or novels, or books on genealogy, or a summer reading program.

"What you will find is a sizable legal collection, free computer access with no wait times, audiovisual equipment for watching training DVDs, a copier with scanning capability to create digital documents, and a historical environmental map collection," said Research Librarian John Conger.

The library is open to the public, which may use any of its resources; borrowing, however, is limited to registered staff

from the TCEQ and other state agencies. Registration is required.

Serving the Entire State

"Research plays a large role in my life and, even though we are in the digital age, there are times when it is important to see the paper document," said Marcelino A. Estrada. The executive director of the Texas Board of Professional Land Surveying, Estrada is one of the library's many outside-agency users.

"I am grateful that the TCEQ recognizes the importance of having not only a centralized library, but a great professional staff to assist users as well."

"We pride ourselves on customer satisfaction and meeting the specific needs of our patrons in a timely manner," said Todd.

Volumes of Additions

The library regularly updates its holdings, purchasing about 1,100 new titles a year.

“We get suggestions from department heads, staff, and recommended reading lists. Also, some of the additions to the library are actually purchased by the [agency’s] divisions. They choose titles based on their needs, and we catalog them and add them to the collection,” said Todd. “And even if we don’t have something, we can probably get it—as we are also a member of an interlibrary loan network where publications, books, and articles are loaned between network libraries around the country.”

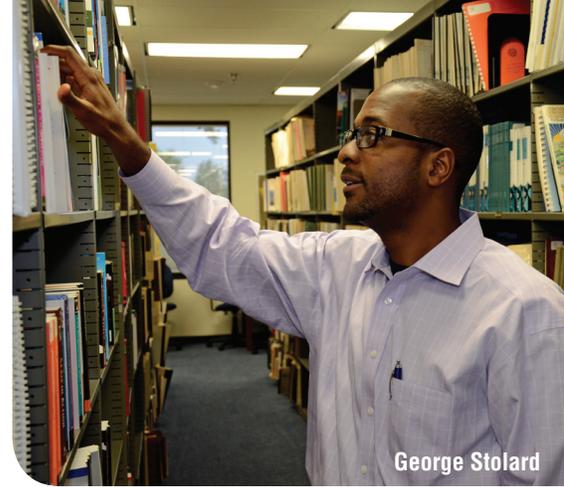
A User-Friendly Philosophy

The collection currently includes over 2,500 computer reference books.

“Computer books allow our employees to learn new programming languages, and they are widely used in our Information Resources Division and throughout the agency,” said Conger.

George Stolar extends his arm to the top shelf of a bookcase, locating a 5-inch-thick volume on database authoring. Stolar, a TCEQ software project manager, finds a few other books and makes his way to a table, where he pores over the pages. Here, at the TCEQ library, is where you can find him a few times a week.

“Having a book, as opposed to reading something online, allows me to dive deeper into the material,” he said. “For example, Microsoft has a helpful web tutorial, but the problem with that format is that you are forced to



George Stolar

Meet Your Librarians



Vonda Todd

Education: Master’s Degree, Library Science, University of Texas at Austin
Previous library experience: Texas Medical Association, Clemson University, University of South Carolina (Aiken and Spartanburg campuses)
Years at the TCEQ: 7



John Conger

Education: Master’s Degree, Library Science, University of Texas at Austin
Previous library experience: Brown McCarroll (law firm), Texas State Law Library, Perry-Castañeda Library (UT Austin)
Years at the TCEQ: 6

Contact info

Location: Ground floor, Building A, Park 35
Hours: 8:00 a.m.–noon and 1:00–5:00 p.m., Mon.–Fri. (except federal holidays)
Phone: 512-239-0020
On the Web: www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/library

What Can You Find at the TCEQ Library?

This list represents only some of the holdings of the TCEQ library.

- Maps
- Geographical atlases
- Environmental journals
- Dam safety reports
- American Water Works Association materials
- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards
- TCEQ documents
- TCEQ predecessor agency documents (including water adjudications)
- Texas Water Board reports
- Texas statutes
- *Texas Administrative Code*
- *Texas Register*
- Texas cases
- EPA documents (including soil surveys and toxicology materials)
- *Code of Federal Regulations*
- *United States Code Annotated*
- *Federal Register*
- Federal cases
- Session laws
- Professional Engineering (PE) exam review materials
- Software-related study materials (including books on Adobe, Ajax, Apache, Cascading Style Sheets [CSS], Cold Fusion, Crystal, Document Object Model [DOM], Extensible Markup Language [XML], Flex, Java, JavaScript, JBoss, Linux, Oracle, Perl, Plone, Python, Rails, Seam, Structured Query Language [SQL], Tomcat, and Unix) 🌐

Texas Agency Libraries

LIBRARY	SIZE OF COLLECTION
Texas State Library & Archives Commission	382,000
Legislative Reference Library	183,000
Texas State Law Library	100,000
TCEQ Library	65,000
Texas State Department of Health	10,000
Texas Fire Commission	4,300
Public Utility Commission	4,000

watch the video to find an answer. After spending time looking for help online, I was able to go to the TCEQ library, find the correct edition and version of a Microsoft Project manual, and find answers to my multiple questions in a shorter amount of time than using Microsoft's online service."

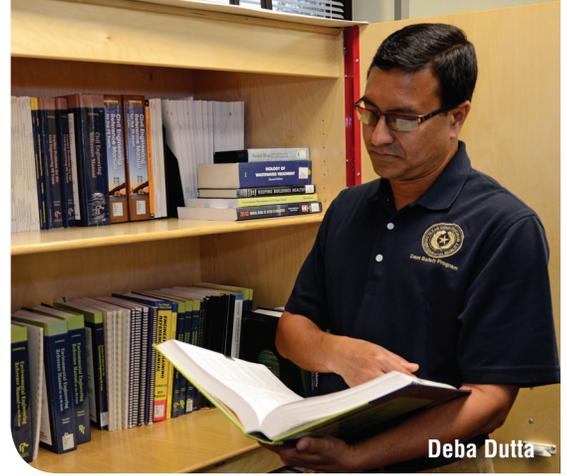
"A large part of our job is providing TCEQ staff with the tools they need to become better employees. We want to play a role in helping our employees become leading experts in their field," said Conger.

To make it even easier to browse, the TCEQ library enters all its holdings into the Library Catalog of Texas State Agencies, an online public-access catalog.

The holdings include an impressive number of study materials, as Deba Dutta discovered. Earlier this year, he needed to study for a professional-engineering exam. His options appeared to be limited to borrowing materials from his co-workers in the TCEQ's Dam Safety Program, or purchasing the seven books needed to brush up on the topic.

"It's a 100-question test, so it was imperative that I have the texts readily available to me," he said.

But Dutta quickly discovered that there was another choice: using the resources at the TCEQ library. "I was in there three times



a week, studying with the materials the library already had on its shelves."

He passed the test on the first try. 🇺🇸

Related Information

Library Catalog of Texas State Agencies:
<http://tsla.sirsi.net>



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