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New Chief Executive Onboard

After nine years at the TCEQ, Glenn Shankle becomes executive director. He outlines his goals for the agency.

A veteran of state government, Glenn Shankle becomes the TCEQ's top administrator

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With 26 years of management experience in state government, Glenn Shankle is no stranger to the problems faced by state agencies. He has headed up agency departments in which the staff numbered in the hundreds. Now, as TCEQ executive director, he has a workforce of 3,000 looking to him for guidance and direction.

Shankle says he'll stick with a management philosophy that's served him well: "Be fair and provide quality public services."

He goes on to say that anyone who has chosen public service for a career should be willing "to give the job 110 percent and produce a quality product."

Shankle, 51, says he came to embrace that credo while working for the late Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock, who was also a mentor and a friend.

Shankle has served in a number of managerial positions, including deputy comptroller. In that position, he oversaw a multi-billion-dollar tax collection and processing system with an annual operating budget of \$400 million.

When Bullock advanced to the state's second-highest elective office, Shankle followed him to the Texas Senate to head up personnel services.

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Environmental Service Begins

Shankle came to the TCEQ in 1995. For the last six years, he was deputy executive director, reporting to former executive directors Jeff Saitas and Margaret Hoffman. In the No. 2 job, he used his government experience to manage day-to-day operations and to provide oversight of the agency's budget and workforce.

In Brief: Glenn Shankle

TCEQ:

- Deputy executive director, 1998 - 2004
- Deputy director, Office of Administrative Services, 1995 - 1998

Texas Senate:

- Director of personnel, 1991-1995

Comptroller of Public Accounts:

- Deputy comptroller, 1988 - 1990
- Director of enforcement, 1987 - 1988
- Regional director of enforcement, 1986 - 1987
- Associate deputy of enforcement, 1985 - 1986
- Associate deputy comptroller for revenue management, 1985
- Director of support services, 1983 - 1985
- Facilities manager, 1978 - 1983



Glenn Shankle was named executive director in July 2004. In this role, he manages the day-to-day operations of the state's primary environmental agency. The TCEQ has broad responsibilities dealing with air quality and water quality, water supply, and waste management.

Now in the top post, Shankle brings clear-cut ideas and goals to the office.

First on his list is working with the three-member commission to ensure that all air quality improvement requirements are fulfilled.

Second, Shankle plans to complete the agency's internal enforcement review process and guide the recommendations through completion with the commissioners. Some of the new policies, if adopted, will take effect in early 2005, while others will take six to 12 months to be fully realized.

The end result, he predicts, will be a revamped enforcement program that is fairly implemented and even more protective of human health and the environment.

"My interest is making sure the agency provides the best service possible in the interest of public health and the environment, and that we respond to the residents of the state, whether that be citizens, industries, environmentalists, or legislators. I do believe there is room for

improvement," he said.

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Internal Review

The executive director also says he will review agency structure and resources to determine whether programs--and personnel--can operate more efficiently. "We should ask: Are we using our human resources and our technology to the greatest capacity?"

Along that line, he is interested in increasing regional office staffs, which now represent about one-third of agency personnel.

An organizational review began in September, with the Management Advisory Services Section of the State Auditor's Office assisting as consultants.

The review also is examining TCEQ activities with small businesses and ways of providing greater assistance to small businesses at the local level.

Helping small businesses with compliance is important to Shankle because they account for 54 percent of all enforcement orders. "There has to be a fair way of providing the knowledge required of them so they don't go out of business trying to satisfy the laws," he said.

On the federal front, Shankle wants to maintain improved working relationships with the Environmental Protection Agency and to further explore funding options that would help the state address federal mandates.

Finally, Shankle says, his ultimate goal is for the public to better understand the scope of TCEQ functions and responsibilities, because too many Texans do not realize what the agency does or the extent of the agency's involvement in their lives.

"The more that people know about us, the more they'll feel comfortable when they need assistance with their community or to report an environmental concern," he explained. "This is something I really want to pursue."

As for the thousands of entities regulated by the TCEQ, Shankle says that, for the most part, they have been cooperative and have demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental laws and rules.

"Regulated entities in Texas have largely risen to the challenge of protecting air and water quality," he said. "There have been those that haven't, though. I'm a big believer in a level playing field. So whether noncompliance comes from not knowing how to follow the rules or not wanting to, it is vital that we make everyone meet the standards."

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Outside the Office

When Shankle isn't pursuing his work goals, he is usually involved in one of two outside interests--those involving his 12-year-old daughter, Alexis, or his motorcycle, a Harley-Davidson Road King.

Shankle frequently accompanies his daughter to her many activities, which include school events and equestrian competitions.

Or he can be found in the local Harley store buying accessories for his motorcycle, which he takes on road trips. A 200- to 300-mile excursion goes by quickly, he finds, explaining: "It's good thinking time, and it's very therapeutic."

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No. 2 Post Filled

As the TCEQ's new deputy executive director, Mark Vickery assists Executive Director Glenn Shankle in agency administration.

Vickery, 44, most recently served as deputy director for the agency's Office of Permitting, Remediation, and Registration.

He has also headed up the Office of Compliance and Enforcement as deputy director.

During his 16 years at the TCEQ, Vickery has also worked as director of the Field Operations Division, manager of the Waste Tire Recycling Program, and in several managerial posts in regulatory enforcement programs.

The native Texan graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor of science in geology. Before joining the TCEQ, he was an exploration geologist in Midland.

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