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“I believe, if you scratch deeply enough, you will find that those who serve – no matter how outwardly tough or jaded or egotistical – are, in their heart of hearts, romantics and idealists. And optimists. We actually believe we can make a difference,” he said. Volunteers in the service of the public are people “willing to make sacrifices in the present for the future good, people who believe, to paraphrase Walter Lippmann, that we must plant trees we may never get to sit under.”



Profiles of Community Service

That IIAT members distinguish themselves everyday as successful insurance professionals is clear. What is not so well-known is that many also have stepped into the arena of public service to help those less fortunate live safe, comfortable and meaningful lives. Robert Gates, recently retired Texas A&M president, has said that each one in public service has his or her own story – and motives.

IIAT understands this public trust and that many agents and agencies alike believe public service to be a way of life. To that end IIAT wants to tell the stories of those who give back to their communities. These then are the stories of some of the insurance professionals who make a difference.

Independent Agent

Scott Bruner *sets pace in*

REINVENTING EDUCATION;

helps raise **\$9.1 million**

How can students in Texarkana who graduate with a college degree be encouraged to stay home to pursue a career? That was the deceptively complex challenge a citizen's group set out to tackle 6 years ago.

A generation earlier long-serving U.S. Rep. Wright Patman testified that median income in his northeast Texas district was 30 percent below the state average. Today it is still 30 percent below average with the number of people holding 4-year degrees also 30 percent below the state average. That reality lit a fire that burns to this day.

One of those citizens is Texarkana insurance agent Scott Bruner, a principal at Offenhauser & Co. With his abundant energy and passion, it wasn't long before Scott began to act on his notion that there appeared a strong

correlation between education level and a region's economic health.

He believed that Texarkana needed an innovative system of education that would mentor and monitor students in math and engineering from pre-kindergarten through college graduation - PK/16 for short. Scott calls it a silo approach to education.

Scott's wisdom, dedication and hard work brought in \$9.1 million in a fundraising campaign in partnership with Texarkana native son, H. Ross Perot for a new College of Information Sciences and Engineering and downward expansion to include freshmen and sophomore students at a brand new campus of the previously upper division-only Texas A&M University - Texarkana. It will eventually serve 8,000 students.

A critical step in the solution has been the construction of a new math and engineering elementary school that opened in late summer of 2007. The new school, called the Martha and Josh Morriss

Math & Engineering Elementary, is the starting place for students who will continue through the system to a college degree in engineering from the downwardly expanded TAMU-Texarkana.

In addition to his tireless work reinventing the education system, Scott is also wrapping up a 6-year stint on the Texarkana ISD school board, four of



Scott Bruner, left; Ross Perot Jr.; Josh Morriss Jr.; Larry Sullivan (former superintendent); Martha Morriss and Frank Coleman, president, Texarkana College, break ground for the new Martha and Josh Morriss Math & Engineering Elementary School. (Groundbreaking brochure [<http://www.iiat.org/down/TexarGrndbrking.pdf>])

those as president. He and his wife, Jane, were recognized for their lifetime of civic volunteer work with the C.E. Palmer Award, a distinction they share with agency principals, Don and William Morriss.

Bruner also received the Eagle award presented by the university and is only the second recipient in the history of the institution to have received the

award. Lt. Governor David Dewhurst is the only other recipient. Perot and Dewhurst both helped mark the opening of the new campus.

Scott continues a long history of his agency's community service dating back to the dawn of the 20th Century when founder Fred Offenhauser set the pace.