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50 CENTS, City Edition

CORPUS CHRISTI

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64°/35°

COLD START

6B

Quickread

LOCAL

Rockport Marine, 21, killed in Iraq

A Rockport family was notified Thursday that their son, 21-year-old Matthew Wayne Holloway, died Thursday while serving in Iraq. **1B**

NATION



Burial sites slow Ennis Joslin work

Road runs atop 1,000-year-old Indian grounds

BY MATTHEW STURDEVANT

Caller-Times

Construction on Ennis Joslin Road has taken longer than expected partly because the road is on top of an ancient American Indian burial site, Texas Department of Transportation officials said Thursday.

The transportation department has known about the burial grounds since the late 1990s — before construction began in June 2000, but word of the burial grounds didn't become public until Thursday.

During a talk to the Rotary Club of Corpus Christi on Thursday, transportation department district engineer Craig E. Clark mentioned that Ennis Joslin has taken longer than expected because the department had to move utility pipes that were in unexpected places and because of the extent of the burial site.

"There was the potential for Indian arti-

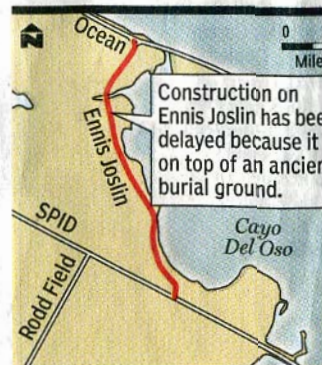
facts all through this," Clark said. When asked after the meeting, Clark said the site is beneath the middle of the road and runs almost the entire stretch from South Padre Island Drive to Ocean Drive.

Initially, the project was expected to be complete in late 2003, and that was later bumped to May 2004. Now the project is expected to be complete in September.

State transportation officials said they didn't mention the burial ground earlier

Please see **ROADWORK 6A**

■ Major highway projects to be completed this year **6A**



ROADWORK From 1A

because they were concerned looters might scavenge bones and ancient tools.

"We have tried not to advertise this because of the concern brought to TxDOT by Native American descendants," said Nancy Kenmotsu, director of cultural resources within the transportation department's Environmental Affairs Division.

Transportation department officials did some test excavations to find out the extent of the burial site in the late 1990s, before construction began, Kenmotsu said.

"They probably are ancestral to the Karankawas," Kenmotsu said of the skeletal remains.

The department met with members of the Karankawa tribe before construction started, she said. In order to preserve the artifacts, the transportation department contracted with the University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research.

The university archaeological group is one of two higher education groups in Texas hired by the transportation department to preserve artifacts during highway construction. Officials at the Cen-



George Tuley/Caller-Times

Construction on Ennis Joslin Road, with the section between Nile Drive and Alameda Street shown, has proceeded slowly largely because the construction site lies atop American Indian burial grounds.

ter for Archaeological Research deferred comments to the transportation department.

So far, archaeologists have found skeletal remains of a few individuals, along with several tools made from shells and rocks,

Kenmotsu said.

Most of the bodies are buried below where the construction contractors are digging.

Archaeologists will likely do carbon testing to date the artifacts once construction is finished in

September.

The burial site probably dates from 2500 B.C. to 1000 A.D., according to Robert Drolet, an archaeologist at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History, who also teaches anthro-

pology at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

"They're ancestral to the Karankawa, but we can't call them by name because they may not have gone by that name," Drolet said.

He said the burial site is one of the larger ones — if not the largest — in Texas. It extends all along Oso Bay and Oso Creek, and professional archaeological digs have been going on in that area since at least the 1930s.

In recent decades, people have scavenged artifacts from the area, which is unlawful.

"That area has been damaged so heavily in the past 30 to 40 years because of people picking things up and throwing them in cigar boxes in their home," Drolet said, referring to an area near Oso Creek. "It's totally illegal."

Ennis Joslin was widened from two lanes to five lanes to allow a better flow of traffic from South Padre Island Drive to A&M-Corpus Christi and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. The total contract is \$17.725 million and was awarded to Haas-Anderson Construction Ltd.

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