



Rural Texan

Office of Rural Community Affairs ☆ Rural News and Information for Rural Texans ☆ Fall 2004

CDBG Celebrates 30 Years of Community Improvement

State of Texas, ORCA Recognized for Assisting Colonia Residents

The national Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program celebrated its 30-year anniversary at its 2004 conference on September 13-14th at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) hosted the event, which focused on the program's unique ability to generate participation at the local level, the success stories of communities that benefited from CDBG, and challenges the program will face in the future.

The program, founded in 1974 by President Ford, has provided more than \$108 billion in funding to state and local governments to build strong neighborhoods, increase opportunities for low income residents, and promote job growth and business development. CDBG projects are often initiated by local communities and are distinguished by outstanding levels of recipient commitment and community participation.

HUD recognized the state of Texas and 13 other
(Continued on page 22)

Executive Director of ORCA Resigns

By Jill McFarren, ORCA

ORCA's inaugural executive director, Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, MS resigned his post effective October 1, 2004 to accept a position within the private sector. The agency's General Counsel, J. Randel (Jerry) Hill stepped in to fill Tessen's shoes as Acting Executive Director until the agency's Executive Committee completes its search for a new ED.

The role of the Executive Director is to carry out the administration of the programs and services supported by ORCA, in partnership with the leadership of the agency's Executive Committee.

Acting Executive Director Hill holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration (BBA) degree from Southwest Texas State University and a Juris Doctorate (JD) degree from St. Mary's University. Licensed by the Texas State Bar for over 30 years, Hill has extensive experience in the practice of Administrative Law and the licensing of individuals and entities before state administrative agencies. He has served as an Administrative Law Judge for what is now the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, as well as serving as the General Counsel to the Texas Workforce Commission and the Board of Public Accountancy. He has also served as the Director of Mining of the Texas Railroad Commission, managing over 75 employees for 11 years. He has had five gubernatorial appointments to committees overseeing state and national regulatory activities. Hill became ORCA's General Counsel in May 2002.

"I and the professional, experienced ORCA staff, under the leadership of the executive committee, are working to continue the consistent administration of ORCA's programs and services, and look forward to a seamless transition to the next executive director," Hill said.

ORCA Executive Committee Chair, William "Bill" Jeter noted, "We look forward to all the new challenges and opportunities ahead of us as we take steps to find a new executive director to further guide the administration of the programs, services and activities of the agency."



Acting Executive Director
J. Randel (Jerry) Hill



Inaugural Executive
Director Robt. J. "Sam"
Tessen, MS



From the Desk of...

The Executive Committee Chair

The founding of the Office of Rural Community Affairs was a turning point for state government and for the rural communities ORCA serves. By creating ORCA, Texas acknowledged the importance of the smallest rural community to the state's prosperity, and also committed itself to the new, proactive role that government must play if we wish to realize a bright future in a state as diverse, unique and full of potential as Texas.

Choosing ORCA's first leaders was a key part of starting up the new agency. As any football fan will tell you, the charter members of a team have great influence on the future of that team. These first team members have the opportunity to establish what the team is capable of and set high expectations for performance in years to come. They not only set the expectations of the fans, they meet those expectations through their many accomplishments.

Since ORCA's founding, the leaders and staff of the agency have pursued the agency's mission – to promote economic growth that improves the lives of rural Texans – tackling each issue separately while understanding rural Texas as a whole.

Since ORCA's inception, Executive Director Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, MS, has brought staff together from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and the Texas Department of Health's (TDH's) Center for Rural Health Initiatives and helped create an agency that serves the diverse needs of a rural constituency, even as those needs were still being discovered. Under his leadership, a staff already knowledgeable about rural community development and health care took on the entire spectrum of rural issues, and the agency became the door to Texas government for rural citizens.

As a benefit of ORCA's rural focus, we better understand rural communities, the people, and their strengths and weaknesses. We understand the interconnectivity of all the elements of the community, and have gained insight into the way natural resources, economic factors, infrastructure, school systems, health care and people function together so that we can provide the best possible assistance and support to rural Texans. ORCA also continues to work with other state agencies to help them keep rural interests in mind as they develop policies and projects.

Meanwhile, ORCA continues to take state government to local rural communities and further establish the agency as an advocate for rural interests, a rural insider that works to promote the best possible outcomes for those it represents.

Even with change in individual leaders, ORCA's mission will remain the same, as will its dedication to service on a local level. The role as rural advocate that characterizes ORCA will continue through whatever changes in leadership occur, now and in the future, because it is one of our founding principles, and the work we do is crucial, not only for rural Texas, but for all of Texas.

William M. Jeter III
Chair, ORCA Executive Committee

The Executive Director

Change! Rural Texas is in a continuous state of change. Living in a rural community means constantly dealing with change. People move in and others leave. Businesses start and others close. Services for rural citizens develop, grow, and sometimes struggle. Quality of life is both stable and has its ups-and-downs. Rural folks get used to change because it is a fact of life.

Three years ago, another change occurred. The State of Texas, through the proactive leadership efforts of the Legislature, created a new agency to serve the needs and the future of rural Texas. It was innovative and also very challenging. It offered new possibilities that took some getting used to. It brought to the table some new folks who were willing to work for rural communities.

For the governing board and staff of the Office of Rural Community Affairs, it meant a new vision and a new mission for existing programs. It meant learning a different way of doing things to better serve rural Texas. For rural Texans, it meant learning new avenues for advocacy and new mechanisms for participation in state government.

For me, personally, it has meant meeting many rural folks all across our state. It has meant learning issues that were new for me and learning new perspectives on a whole range of needs. It has been so enlightening and exciting to meet so many folks, each with his or her own ideas, suggestions, needs and solutions. I have had the honor to meet elected leaders, managers of programs and services, business people, advocates, private sector leaders, people of color and of faith, educators and health care providers, students, consumers and everyday citizens.

I have learned much. I have had to change myself, my opinions, and how I viewed things. It has been exciting, challenging, and a lot of hard work. It has meant visiting many different communities in our state for the first time and finding folks in these communities trying new things and challenging old habits. It has truly been a phenomenal experience personally and professionally. I have gained an even more positive and healthy respect for our rural Texans and their communities.

Like change that happens every day in rural Texas, it is a time for a change in my professional life. It is with a deep sense of sadness and emotion that I have decided to move on to another position. Leaving ORCA is not easy because it has been my life for three years. I know that our agency has begun to make a difference, to earn credibility and, perhaps most importantly, to listen to a lot of folks who felt distanced from their state government. I know that we have helped our state leaders bring state government to people, rather than the other way around.

I have learned that rural Texas is going to be around for a very long time. Oh, it will continue to change in any number of ways, but rural Texans will continue to be a significant part of the future of our state. After all, we are all in this together – all of us, rural, suburban and urban.

This experience has been a highlight of my life, one that I will carry with me forever. Thank you for your friendship, trust and faith. Thank you for all you have taught me and shared with me. Thank you for your optimism and for being all that you are in rural Texas. I know I will never be the same again.

Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, MS
Executive Director

Inside this Issue...

Guest Column: Community Colleges: Little Engines That Can	4
Spotlight on . . .	
TFB: Policy on a Local Level	5
City of San Augustine	5
TWDB Reviews Seawater Desalination Plans	6
\$58 Million Available in Rural Water Assistance Fund	6
Colonias in Texas: Challenges for Aging Well	7
Preservation Holds Opportunities for Rural Communities	8
Pecos County Map Comes Home to Stay	8
A Study of Injury in Farmworker Children	9
DOE's Energy Saving Tips Make Homes More Efficient	10
Food Festivals Bring Crowds to Rural Texas	10
Predatory Lending Dominates Manufactured Home Industry	11
Study Evaluates Rural Texas	11
Funding Opportunities.....	12
Learning Opportunities	13
Northernmost Texas Nest of Least Grebes Discovered in Richland, Texas	14
State Launches Two New Health and Human Services Agencies	14
Life of a Rural Family Doctor	15
Dairy Waste Management System Could Set Precedent	15
Texas Big Game Awards Improve Ecosystem and Economy	16
Mail-Order Services Harm Rural Pharmacies	16
Wheat, Cattle Prices to Remain Strong in 2004	17
Why Rural Communities Differ: Social Dynamics Give Some Clues.....	18
Forums Help Rural communities Age Well	18
Local Presence Keeps ORCA Connected to Rural Communities....	19
Texas Recycles Day	19
ORCA Nominates Community of Kennedy Ridge for Recognition by HUD.....	20
TxDOT Assists Holiday Travelers on I-35	20
Living in Rural Texas ...	
Panhandle Antiques and East Texas Tomatoes	21
Rural Lifestyle All the Rage for Ex-Suburbanites	21
Texas Game Warden's Top 10 Check-List for Hunters....	22
ORCA's Program Activities ..	23
ORCA Requests \$194,306,854 for FY 2006-07 Biennium	23
ORCA 's TCDP Workshops Assist Grant Recipients.....	23
Subscription Renewal Notice	24

CMS Delays Enforcement of Location Requirements for Rural Health Clinics

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has advised state agencies that it has not yet implemented the new Rural Health Clinic (RHC) regulations it established on December 24, 2003, and Medicare participating RHCs should not be disqualified if they do not meet adjusted basic location requirements.

The December regulations state that RHC clinics must be located in an area designated within the last three years by the federal government as a Health Professional Shortage Area or a Medically Underserved Area, or in an area designated by the state's Governor as an underserved area.

The CMS also advised that the December requirements for the Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) program are not mandatory at this time. QAPI programs are intended to help RHCs assess and improve the quality of care they provide to patients in their area.

While the delay will postpone status adjustments for some health clinics, CMS noted that re-certification reviews should proceed as scheduled since RHCs must still meet existing rural shortage area location requirements.

Projected Payment Increase for Rural Hospices

The CMS announced on August 23, 2003, that payments to rural area hospices are likely to increase by 2.9 percent in 2005, as a result of more accurate payment calculations. The increase will add \$23 million in payments to rural hospice providers, bringing the projected total for 2005 Medicare payments to all hospice services to \$6 billion, an overall increase of one percent.

Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, online at www.cms.hhs.gov/.



Guest Column

Community Colleges: Little Engines That Can

By Dr. Larry Phillip, President, Angelina College in Lufkin

Community colleges are the engines that drive the economic development of our state, especially in rural Texas. The major gateway to educational opportunity is now through community colleges, where more than 74 percent of all freshmen and sophomores in Texas now enroll. An even greater percentage of ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged, and first-generation college students gain access to higher education through one of the state's fifty public community colleges.

Over the last several decades, these rapidly growing colleges have become the key to economic growth and workforce development. Many of the more than half a million students who come to community colleges each year are enrolled in workforce education. Community colleges now provide most of the state's nurses and health care workers, computer and electronic technicians, child care teachers, and trained employees in dozens of

other much-needed occupational areas. Courses are custom designed to bring new employers into rural areas. Community colleges are also the pipelines to distribute twenty-five million dollars of state skill-development grants directly to businesses in their service area. Despite their success, the state's rural community colleges now have a very steep hill to climb due to inherent disadvantages in their growth rates and tax districts compared to faster growing urban areas.

State funding is distributed through a formula based on a college's share of the state's students and their class contact hours. Rural colleges that grew as much as eight percent during the last biennium still lost state funding dollars because many urban schools grew 15-20 percent or more. Although community colleges grew by over 60,000 new students from 2000-2002, the state budget crisis saw community college funding decrease by five percent.

Many rural colleges were organized decades ago with a tax district covering only a single county or school district and are now required to serve a number of counties. Rural colleges provide services to a large area, but often have a small, limited tax district. Annexation is a very difficult task in rural areas.

The low-cost, powerful little engines that are the state's rural community colleges need help "climbing the hill" of funding barriers. Much-needed additional funding from the state must not unduly hurt rural colleges with slower growth rates. We must also find a way for all counties and school districts in the state to contribute to the community college tax base. Perhaps, this can be done while restructuring the public school finance system. The effective combination of affordable tuition, low local tax rates, and state funding that is the biggest "bargain" in the state budget must continue to fuel all community colleges in the state.



OFFICE OF RURAL COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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RWHC Eye On Health



"He says our insurance this month only allows him to treat body parts in the first half of the alphabet."

Cartoon by Tim Size, Executive Director, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative. Reprinted with permission.



Spotlight On...

TFB: Policy on a Local Level

By Gene Hall, Texas Farm Bureau

The Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) is the largest organization of farmers, ranchers and rural citizens in Texas. Organized in 1933, TFB now counts more than 371,000 families in its membership. TFB is headquartered in Waco (McLennan County), Texas, and affiliated nationally with the American Farm Bureau Federation, more than five million member families strong, with organizations in every state.

In Texas, the Farm Bureau has 19 organized commodity divisions, comprised of farmers and ranchers, and standing committees of farm labor, natural resources and animal health. The purpose of this organizational structure is to allow members to study and consider the challenges of individual commodity producers and the problems faced by rural communities. The resources of the entire organization can be focused on solutions and answers.

Texas Farm Bureau is organized in 207 Texas counties, and service is provided to all those areas by one of those County Farm Bureau offices. TFB maintains a legislative office in Austin, and the AFBF is headquartered in Washington, DC.

The Farm Bureau at all levels is known as a staunch defender of private property rights and for building consensus on rural issues. Traditionally, TFB represents its members in the legislative process, both in Austin and Washington, in the regulatory process and in the courts.

Farm Bureau policy is developed by a grass roots driven process. Policy resolutions originate at the County Farm Bureau level. A state convention is convened annually to consider CFB approved resolutions. National policies approved at the state level go on to the AFBF convention, held each year in January. For more information about Texas Farm Bureau, contact Gene Hall, Director of Public Relations, at 254-751-2246 or ghall@txfb.org.

City of San Augustine

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Texas heroes like Sam Houston, Davy Crockett and Texas' first governor, J. Pinckney Henderson, walked the streets of San Augustine (San Augustine County) in the town's early days, when it had a reputation as the most civilized outpost in Texas.

"The Cradle of Texas Independence", as San Augustine is known today, is located on Highway 21, also called the El Camino Real (Royal Highway), which follows the Old San Antonio Road, cleared in 1690 by Spanish traveler Domingo Terán de los Ríos. The first European visitors ventured into the region's dense forests in the early 1540s, but the land was already home to the Ais tribe of the Hasinai Indians; the Mission Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais (Dolores Mission) was established in 1717 near their village on the Ayish Bayou.

All of San Augustine is imbued with history. Architecture, place names and even the layout of the city — which may be one of the earliest platted grids in Texas — tell the story of the town and its role in the nation's conflicts over three centuries. San Augustine survived invasion by the French, the Texas Revolution, the Cordova Rebellion, the Cherokee War and the Regulator-Moderator War before incorporating on June 5, 1837. During the Civil War San Augustine sent three companies to battle, and a battalion of the Third Texas Brigade protected the town.

By 1903, the railroads helped the town grow until the Great Depression when the lumber companies, who employed most of the citizens, left town or went out of business. Gun battles broke out in 1934 and the Texas Rangers had to subdue the town. During World War II the Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative established its headquarters in San Augustine, and the town began to recover.

San Augustine County includes 66,799 acres in Angelina National Forest and 4,317 acres in Sabine National Forest, as well as the Sam Rayburn Reservoir. Outdoor recreational activities, historic sites, and charming festivals such as the Sassafras Festival in October, make San Augustine an attractive place to visit.

In addition to the Dolores Mission, other historic structures of note include the the Ezekiel W. Cullen home, built in Greek Revival style in 1839, and the Old Town Well, dug to the depth of 27 feet by slave labor in 1860. San Augustine's annual Tour of Medallion Homes and Historic Places draws tourists who are interested in state and national history and the unique role San Augustine played in both. For more information, visit the county chamber of commerce online at www.sanaugustinetx.com.



The Ezekiel Cullen House, built in 1839, was designed by Augustus Phelps. From the brochure "San Augustine - Come Back to the Texas Republic," made possible by the Summerlee Foundation. Courtesy of the San Augustine County Chamber of Commerce.

TWDB Reviews Seawater Desalination Plans

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) projects that by the year 2050, 40 million people will call Texas home, tapping into 67 percent more of the state's existing supply of fresh water, even as that supply decreases by 19 percent. Squeezed between increasing demand and dwindling resources, Texans could find that drinking water becomes one of the state's most costly commodities.

Desalination of brackish (salty) groundwater has been recognized as a cost-effective and drought-resistant way to supply drinking water to Texas. In fact, the state already has 150 desalination plants that treat more than 40 million gallons of brackish groundwater every day. Eighty percent of these plants use membrane-based desalination to produce potable water.

In membrane-based desalination, salty water is forced through a membrane that can be penetrated only by water molecules. Too large to get through the membrane, the salt molecules

are left behind to form a concentrated by-product.

The salty by-product is disposed of in landfills, or through a method called deep-well injection. Disposing of the by-product by injecting it into deep wells is not known to cause damage to the environment. However, depositing the by-product into the ocean, a cheaper option for some coastal facilities, could harm marine ecosystems. The high concentration of salt in the by-product could force marine organisms to leave the coastal areas.

In September 2003, the TWDB provided a total of \$1.5 million in grant money to the Brazos River Authority, the Brownsville Public Utility Board and the City of Corpus Christi to prepare water facility plans for seawater desalination projects. The water facility plans, which include cost projections, project needs, and project and market analyses, were delivered to TWDB at the end of August 2004. TWDB will report its

findings to the Governor's Office and the Legislature at the end of 2004.

The cost of desalinating seawater is higher, at least for now, than desalinating brackish groundwater or treating fresh groundwater. However, desalination of seawater holds promise because of the potential to reduce disputes over water supply by accessing the Gulf of Mexico.

In 2001, the American Membrane Technology Association estimated the cost of desalting one month's supply of brackish groundwater for four people (12,000 gallons) at \$18-\$36, compared to about \$8.40 - \$30 to treat the same amount of fresh groundwater. The cost of desalting the same amount of seawater is \$36-\$96.

Energy costs make up 20 to 50 percent of a desalination plant's operating cost, so the saltier the water source, the more the treated water will cost. Seawater may contain as much as 35,000 milligrams of salt per liter.

\$58 Million Available for Rural Water Assistance

By Lana Lutringer, Texas Water Development Board

Since the introduction of the Rural Water Assistance Fund (RWAFF) program in 2002, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has approved \$35.16 million in low-interest loans to rural political subdivisions for water-related infrastructure projects.

In 2003 the 78th Texas Legislature, through House Bill 1875, recognized the special wastewater needs of rural Texas and expanded the uses of the RWAFF program originally for water only to include wastewater projects.

Those rural political subdivisions that can access these funds include nonprofit water supply corporations, districts, or municipalities serving a population of up to 10,000, or that otherwise qualify for federal financing, or counties in which no urban area has a population exceeding 50,000.

RWAFF loans can be used to fund water-related capital construction projects that may include line extensions, overhead storage, the purchase of well fields, the purchase or lease of rights to produce groundwater - water quality enhancement projects such as wastewater collection and treatment, and interim financing of construction projects.

A rural water utility may also use the fund to obtain water or wastewater service supplied by a larger utility or to finance the consolidation or regionalization of a neighboring utility. RWAFF lending rates have ranged from 5.61 percent to 4.91 percent, with borrowers benefiting from a 40-

year repayment term, as well as receiving sales tax exemptions for projects financed by the fund.

\$58 Million Still Available

The TWDB continues to access the tax-exempt private activity bonds made available through the State's Private Activity Bond Program as the means of financing RWAFF. According to federal law, a state is allowed to make tax-exempt private activity bonds available for certain types of privately-owned projects that benefit the public, such as those financed through the RWAFF.

Federal law restricts the available amount of these bonds each year, and in Texas the bonds are awarded through a lottery system. Reservations for a portion of the annual Private Activity Bond cap are filed each October and allocations are granted the following January 1.

Once an allocation is granted, the TWDB has 180 days to sell and close their Private Activity Bond allocation. On March 30, 2004, the TWDB closed its third \$25 million in bonds to finance water-related and wastewater projects through the RWAFF. There is currently approximately \$58 million in RWAFF funding available.

For more information on the RWAFF program, contact Warren Rose at the TWDB at 512-463-7853 or by e-mail at warren.rose@twdb.state.tx.us.

Colonias In Texas:

Challenges for Aging Well

Part 5 of a 5 Part Series

By Lilitana Santoyo, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

This is Part V in a series of articles that discusses the challenges faced by older adults who live in unincorporated rural areas known as colonias. All colonias share similar characteristics such as geographic isolation, language barriers, inadequate education, inadequate workforce development programs, and substandard health and environmental conditions prevent many residents from obtaining needed health and human services.

However, the diversity of population, the number of colonias, and the distance between colonias in each region provide unique challenges for service providers committed to assisting colonia residents. In this issue, we will be discussing the colonias in the Laredo/Webb County area.

According to the Texas Water Development Board and the Office of the Attorney General, there are 55 colonias in the Laredo/Webb County area. These communities lack the infrastructure to provide amenities such as water, sewage, and electricity. A top priority for many in this region is the lack of potable water and sewer service.

Other barriers such as poverty and inability to speak English prevent older adults from obtaining needed health and human services. The median household income for colonia residents is \$12,899. The poverty rate among older adults is three times greater than that of the state.

Moreover, while half of Webb County residents do not speak English well, almost three quarters of colonia residents in Webb County do not speak English well.

Furthermore, Webb County has been designated as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA). MUA designation is based on the demographics of the area, including the percentage of elderly 65-plus, poverty rate, infant mortality, and ratio of primary care physicians per 1,000 residents.

Adequate housing is an issue for many colonia residents. Many residents who live in the colonias here in this region participate in housing programs where "sweat equity" is a requirement. Residents must participate in the building of not only their home, but the homes of others in the community. The elderly are no exception. Older adults also contribute to construction process.

For others, unsafe homes are a problem. Many of the older adult's homes are in desperate need of overall repairs or modification.

Additionally, bathrooms are a primary concern for many. As some older adults become frail, their mobility around the house is diminished. They become unable to access many rooms, including the bathrooms.

The use of propane gas has also become a problem in many areas where natural gas is not available. Many of the tanks are very old, and due to new regulations, many older adults will not be able to have their propane tanks refilled. This will become an increasing problem since winter is just around the corner. Finally, as with other rural communities, transportation remains one of the greatest needs.

In order to address these and other issues, the HHS Colonias Initiative, through collaborative efforts by the Health and Human Service Agencies, partner state agencies, and local organizations, has been able to create a service delivery system to help residents obtain needed services.

The median household income for colonia residents is \$12,899. The poverty rate among older adults is three times greater than that of the state.

As a participant in the initiative, South Texas Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is the visible entity within the community whose sole purpose is to serve older Texans. AAA provides older adults with access to health and human services via a number of other supportive services through their contracted providers and vendors.

AAA has also begun to address many of the unique issues facing older adults in this region. AAA funds three rural transportation projects in the rural counties of Zapata, Jim Hogg and Starr. These projects primarily devote much of their trips for medical appointments for older adults in the colonias. Our rural counties participating in these transportation programs supplement the cost of the service considerably.

The AAA is also currently conducting health screenings in all the colonias in our area through a contract with the Community Action Council of South Texas Rural Health Program and Gateway Community Health Program. The target population of these screenings is older adults who attend senior centers, nutrition sites, and other community focal points.

In order to address some of the housing issues, the AAA provides residential repairs. The DPS Residential Repair Program primarily assists with shower conversions to allow older adults access to their bathrooms. Currently they are

modifying bathrooms at a rate of five or six per month.

Additionally, while there is funding available for the rehabilitation of homes in rural areas through the Rural Development Program, many older adults do not qualify for assistance. A variety of reasons may prevent them from qualifying, including: inability to show proof of US Citizenship, lack of a clear title to their land, taxes that are not up to date, lack of sewer or running water, or absence of an electric meter hooked up to the house.

Promotoras also assist with food assistance. Promotoras work one day a week at the local food bank sorting and packaging food. In return, they obtain food to distribute at Community Resource Centers located in the colonias.

The progress made because of the Health and Human Services Colonias Initiative has made a big difference in the quality of life for colonia residents. The work of the AAA, Health and Human Service Agencies, partners, and local organizations have helped many older adults obtain services they would otherwise not have access to.

For a free copy of Part 1, 2, 3 or 4 of this series, contact ORCA.

Upcoming Rural Events

Columbus (Colorado County)

"Live Oaks, Dead Folks"

November 6-7, 2004

Tour Odd Fellows Rest Cemetery as local re-enactors tell the tales of the town's past.

Contact: 979-732-8385

Athens (Henderson County)

"The Christmas Park Land of Lights"

November 13, 2004 through January 1, 2005

Holiday display of more than 2 million lights.

Contact: 903-675-7469

Gruene (Comal County)

"Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist"

November 14, 2004

New Orleans style gospel brunch – gospel music with buffet.

Contact: 830-606-1281

Preservation Holds Opportunities for Rural Communities

Even as rural communities and small towns move forward by modernizing infrastructure and pursuing economic development programs, they can benefit by protecting their heritage, historic resources and traditional cultural identities. Preserving these assets can enrich community life and promote tourism. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) encourages the preservation of Texas' historic resources through workshops, programs and grants including the following:

THC's Community Heritage Development (CHD) division, which works with communities to restore historic areas, will be holding the following application workshops in 2004:

- Odessa (Ector County), December 1
- Corsicana (Navarro County), December 7
- Austin (Travis County), December 9

The CHD division houses four programs:

The Certified Local Government program is a partnership between local, state and federal governments designed to help cities and counties develop successful preservation programs in their communities.

The Texas Heritage Trails program promotes tourism by supporting the development of historic and cultural assets in various regions across the state. The program provides technical, marketing and financial assistance to qualifying heritage regions and has revitalized numerous local economies.

Since it began in 1981, the **Texas Main Street program** has helped more than 130 communities revitalize their downtown areas, creating approximately 4,600 new businesses.

Preserving the past can be a path to the future, creating jobs, housing and new businesses for communities with a vision. **The Visionaries in Preservation program** teaches visioning and planning as a means to achieve the benefits of historical preservation.

To learn more about THC's Community Heritage Development division, visit www.thc.state.tx.us/aboutus/abtchd.html. To register for a workshop, contact Mae Zapata at 512-463-6092.

Heritage Tourism Grants

THC began accepting applications for Heritage Tourism Grants for the Lakes and Brazos Trail regions of Texas in September 2004. Forty-nine counties are eligible for to apply for the program, which encourages communities to partner to promote Texas' historic and cultural resources.

Government and nonprofit organizations in counties within an active Texas Heritage Trails region are eligible to apply for the one-year grants, which fund heritage tourism-oriented projects such as interpretation, signage, publications and web sites, curriculum development, educational programs, workshops and training. Grants are one-to-one in-kind or cash grants up to \$5,000.

The application deadline is November 15, 2004. For more information, or to request an application, call 512-463-1236 or email amber.nunez@thc.state.tx.us.

Source: Texas Historical Commission. For more information, visit THC online at www.thc.state.tx.us.

Pecos County Map Comes Home to Stay

By Jim Suydam, Texas General Land Office

A fully restored 1895 map of Pecos County came home to the Texas General Land Office on August 26, 2004. The 57-inch-by-61.5-inch map, drafted by a scion of German nobility, Ernst Von Rosenberg, survived the ravages of more than 100 years of regular use and poor storage conditions. But the wear and tear took its toll on the historic document, and it was sent out for professional restoration earlier this year. Lovingly restored thanks to the private donations of Fort Worth history buff, Glen Sample Ely, the map will now be available for use by future researchers.

Ely has adopted several historic maps through an innovative new initiative – called “Save Texas History” – which raises the money needed for the expensive and time-consuming process of conservation. Land Office staff documented the detailed restoration process over several months with photographs and broadcast-quality video, which is available for use by the news media. The Pecos County map will soon be scanned and become part of the 45,000 plus documents now online for research or reprints.

The Land Office is the constitutional repository for more than 35 million documents containing information about Texas land grants and land transactions dating back to the 18th century. To learn more about the maps of the Texas General Land Office, please visit the Web site at www.savetexashistory.org.

Source: Texas General Land Office media advisory issued August 24, 2004.

A Study of Injury in Farmworker Children

By Sharon P. Cooper, PhD, Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention & Education -
The University of Texas Health Center at Tyler

To build on previous work on injuries among migrant farmworkers, we noted the need for a clear definition of injury and the need to obtain information directly from children. Funded through The University of Texas Health Center at Tyler, investigators at Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health are conducting a three-year cohort study of high school students in Starr County, Texas.

Located along the Texas-Mexico border, Starr County is economically disadvantaged, largely Hispanic, and the home to many farmworkers and their families. Regardless of work status, all high school students were asked to participate and to complete a 30-45 minute self-administered web-based survey in English or Spanish asking to recall information from April 1, 2003 through September 30, 2003.

The study seeks to describe work patterns and to identify risk factors for injuries in farmworker children, and to compare farmworker adolescents with adolescents working non-farm jobs with respect to their work patterns, demographics, health status, health behaviors, and occupational injury. Based on preliminary first year data on 2,949 respondents, 495 adolescents reported doing farmwork during the previous nine months (2003), among whom 160 injuries were reported in 78 students.

Among these young farmworkers, 80 percent of their farmwork jobs involved five or more days a week and 69 percent involved eight or more hours a day. Injury prevention efforts have been hindered by a lack of data on specific work patterns and risk factors for injuries to youth working in agriculture and we hope this study will help inform future interventions.

Reprinted with permission from Vol. 2, No. 2 of *AgConnections*, a publication of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) Agricultural Research Centers.

ORCA's Picture of the Quarter!



Catch "Paisano Pete", a larger-than-life road runner in Fort Stockton (Pecos County), Texas.

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ORCA's Mission:

"To assist rural Texans who seek to enhance their quality of life by facilitating, with integrity, the use of the resources of our state so that sustained economic growth will enrich the rural Texas experience for the benefit of all."

DOE's Energy Saving Tips Make Homes More Efficient

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Feeling good about buying an electric car or taking the bus? You may not be doing all you can to limit greenhouse gas emissions. According to the US Department of Energy (DOE), greenhouse gas emissions from the average *home* can exceed greenhouse gases from the average car.

To help Americans reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by their homes, the DOE is encouraging them to follow the Energy Star program and take key steps that will create an energy efficient house.

Energy Star is a partnership between the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and more than 8,000 private and public organizations to reduce air pollution by providing information and energy-efficient products and solutions to consumers. The products are available in more than 40 categories and feature the Energy Star label.

The Energy Star web site provides advice and tips to consumers and businesses on solutions to common problems such as hot or cold rooms, dust, high energy bills and mold. The web site also offers help assessing the financial value of reduced energy consumption. By following the Energy Star program, Americans saved \$9 billion in 2003.

The DOE's Five-Step Energy Star Program:

1. Replace your five most frequently used lights and bulbs with ones that have the Energy Star label from EPA.
2. Look for products, particularly lighting and home appliances with the Energy Star label.
3. Heat and cool smartly. Have your heating and cooling equipment serviced annually, and remember to replace air filters regularly. Use a programmable thermostat, and when it's time to replace old equipment, choose an Energy Star labeled model.
4. Seal up your home by sealing air leaks, adding insulation and choosing Energy Star labeled windows.
5. Spread the word that energy efficiency is good for your home and the environment and reduces monthly energy bills.

Source: DOE press release issued June 16, 2004. Visit www.energystar.gov/, for more information on making your home more energy efficient.

Food Festivals Bring Crowds to Rural Texas

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Many rural communities host food festivals year round, drawing in thousands, even hundreds of thousands of visitors who are aching for their fill of the savory or sweet cuisine available only in Texas.

With names like "Chilympiad," "East Texas Yamboree" and "Black-Eyed Pea Jamboree," Texas food festivals bring tourist dollars to the small communities that host them, promote the state's superior agricultural products, and give everyone a good excuse to spend the day gorging on the best food the state has to offer.

Most food festivals focus on items with broad popular appeal such as regional produce, barbeque, chili, and seafood, but some festivals feature specialty items like hushpuppies, kolaches, stew or alligator.

Some festivals feature cook-offs and give away prizes to the winning chefs. Lufkin's Southern Hushpuppy Olympics awards \$1000 to the cook who fries-up the ideal batch of hushpuppies. And

the best of the best compete for \$17,000 in prizes at the invitation-only National Championship Barbecue Cook-off in Meridian (Bosque County), Texas.

What's the recipe for a successful food festival?

Penny C. Reeh, Executive Director of the Texas Festival and Event Association, advised rural organizations that want to start or improve a food festival in their communities to choose foods that are regional specialties.

"Choose a theme that captures the unique qualities of the region. Food events are a great way to showcase culture," said Reeh. "It's also important to realize that successful promotion is the key to a good turnout."

Reeh also offered the following advice:

- A few peripheral activities can sweeten the pot, but keep the festival focused on the theme. Don't try to be all things to all people.

- Do a fun event to draw media attention. Eating contests are popular.
- Understand that the audience will expect entertainment. A successful food event may also include music, shopping and children's activities.

Not every food festival is a roaring success, but some well-publicized festivals draw substantial crowds. The Fulton Oysterfest in Fulton (Aransas County) brings in 50,000 visitors annually; 90,000 truck to Poteet (Atascosa County) for strawberries; 7,000 tomato-fans munch out at the Jacksonville (Cherokee County) Tomato Fest; and 35,000 people enjoy spitting watermelon seeds in Luling (Caldwell County) every year. Good attendance isn't just about food, marketing is also important.

"You want to be as creative as possible on how you promote the theme," noted Reeh. "But send a consistent image to build brand equity in the mind of the consumer - those are the events that do well."

Predatory Lending Dominates Manufactured Home Industry

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Manufactured homes, also known as mobile homes, are the home of choice for more than 1.2 million Texans and outnumber traditional homes in many rural counties in Texas. Manufactured homes offer families an opportunity to build wealth when traditional housing is unaffordable. However, predatory lending practices threaten to erode that opportunity as foreclosures on manufactured homes continue and increasing numbers of consumers find equity elusive.

Predatory lending, which targets and exploits consumers who are at a disadvantage because they do not speak English or are unable to qualify for traditional loans, drives up the cost of the manufactured home, and often damages the borrower's credit and makes equity unattainable.

Consumers Union, a nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, released a report in February 2002 on predatory lending in the manufactured home industry. Consumers Union found that predatory mortgage lending was common, and interest rates on most manufactured home loans were two to four percent higher than on traditional home loans. Consumers Union estimates that 21.5 percent of manufactured home loans were made

for more than the initial value of the home so that such homeowners often face years of payments before they have equity in their home.

Recent Legislation

Effective in January 2003, Senate Bill 521 designated manufactured homes as personal property with a statement of ownership instead of a title document, releasing owners from the burdens and benefits they experienced under House Bill 1869, which classified manufactured homes as real property. Senate Bill 521 extends some protections to consumers and allows them to choose between conventional real estate mortgage loans and personal property loans when financing their manufactured home.

Real estate mortgage loans offer lower interest rates and include the same legal protections enjoyed by traditional homeowners, but personal property loans, which usually have high interest rates, are available to a greater number of consumers and leave owners free to move their homes without the restrictions of a conventional loan. Owners with personal property loans are vulnerable to repossession of their property without the right to

judicial proceedings or an opportunity to cure the loan default.

Help for Shoppers

Buying a manufactured home is still a good opportunity for many rural Texans. "Tips on Mobile Homes," published by Consumers Union, can help consumers protect themselves as they shop. The report is available online at <http://consumersunion.org/other/mh/tips.htm>, and in Spanish at www.consumersunion.org/other/mh/espanol.htm.

The tip sheet, which includes detailed information to help prospective owners, emphasizes the need to comparison shop for locations, insurance, financing and homes before buying. Consumers Union warns consumers not to leave the dealer without signed copies of their contracts.

The manufactured housing division of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) licenses and regulates those who manufacture, sell, broker and install manufactured homes. For more information visit www.tdhca.state.tx.us and click on manufactured housing.

Study Evaluates Rural Texas Schools

By Alison Yaunches, Rural School and Community Trust

A new report from the Rural School and Community Trust, *Teachers and Teaching Conditions in Rural Texas*, reveals a number of areas of significant deficiencies as it examines the characteristics of the teaching environment and the teacher corps in rural Texas schools – where almost half a million students go to school each day.

Compared either to non-rural districts in Texas or to rural districts nationwide, rural Texas districts have: a higher teacher turnover rate; a higher percentage of new teachers hired at the last minute; a higher incidence of out-of-field teaching assignments; and notably lower teacher and principal salaries.

However, there is good news: rural educators in Texas report a high level of job satisfaction, despite facing challenging conditions and student populations that include large numbers of children in poverty, migrants, and students with limited English proficiency.

The study uses over 100 indicators in four gauges: characteristics of rural students and communities; characteristics of the current educator corps; selected conditions in rural schools that can be modified by policy; and teacher professional development.

The report offers 19 recommendations for state-level action that address the deficiencies of rural schools in Texas and help ensure that the half a million rural students in Texas will no longer be underserved or left behind.

The report, written by Lorna Jimerson, EdD, a staff member of the Rural School and Community Trust, is available online at www.ruraledu.org/docs/texas_teaching.pdf.

Source: Published with permission of the Rural School and Community Trust. For more information, visit www.ruraledu.org/.



Funding Opportunities

A Sampling of Opportunities Available to Rural Texans

Cooperative Enterprise Grants

Cooperative Enterprise Grants of \$300 to \$10,000 are available through the Cooperative Development Foundation. The grants support a broad range of cooperative activities in rural areas. For more information contact Elizabeth Bailey at 202-383-5459, or email ebailey@cdf.coop, or visit www.cdf.coop/funds_categories.html.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice: Partnerships for Communication grants - The US Department of Health and Human Services is interested in funding research to strengthen the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' (NIEHS) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) support of research aimed at achieving environmental justice for medically underserved and socio-economically disadvantaged populations in the United States.

The application deadline is November 17, 2004. Funding Opportunity Number is RFA-ES-04-007. For more information visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-ES-04-007.html>.

Microenterprise Development

Hewlett-Packard Microenterprise Development Program – This program assists nonprofit agencies that help clients in low-income communities develop or expand microenterprises (very small businesses). Hewlett-Packard provides funding so that nonprofit agencies can benefit from the use of technology in their own operations and offer access to technology to their microenterprise clients.

The deadline for applications is January 23, 2006. Visit http://grants.hp.com/us/programs/micro_index.html.

New and Expanding Nonprofit Programs

The RGK Foundation is accepting Letters of Inquiry for grant funding from nonprofit organizations specializing in the areas of education, community and medicine/health. The RGK Foundation provides programmatic support for new programs or expansion of ongoing successful programs.

All applicants must complete an electronic Letter of Inquiry from the Web site, which will be reviewed by RGK. There is no deadline for submitting an electronic Letter of Inquiry.

Contact information: RGK Foundation, 1301 West 25th Street, Suite 300, Austin, Texas, 78705-4236 or call 512-474-9298.

Reducing Infant Mortality

Disparities in Perinatal Health-Border, Alaska and Hawaii - The US Department of Health and Human Services is offering grants to public and private organizations with programs to improve local perinatal care.

Applicants must be located in areas where significant disparities in perinatal indicators contribute to high infant mortality rates among subpopulations; have a perinatal disparity reduction initiative that has been underway for at least one year; and have a plan to reduce barriers, improve the local perinatal system of care, and work towards eliminating existing disparities in perinatal health. Selected communities must be located within 62 miles of the Mexican border.

The Funding Opportunity Number is HRSA-05-037. The due date for applications is December

28, 2004. Visit <http://grants.hrsa.gov/webExternal/SFO.asp?ID=E285BCA3-9D64-441C-BB1F-7B6E0FE03955>, for more information.

Rural Housing

Rural Housing Demonstration Program – The US Department of Agriculture will fund initiatives to develop new approaches to constructing rural housing that is creative, affordable, durable, energy efficient and diverse. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. Visit <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2003/03-15920.htm>. For more information contact Gloria L. Denson, Senior Loan Specialist, at 202-720-1474.

Got a Good Story to Share?

Do you have a cool story to share with the world, where one of your projects really made a difference in peoples'/communities' lives?

Then you should consider submitting it to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for publication on HUD's website.

We would love to see rural areas and small communities get their fair share of attention!

For more information, call 202-708-1112 or visit the

"Daily Message"

at <http://www.hud.gov/news/focusarc.cfm> or visit

"Good Stories"

at <http://www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf20/index.cfm>.



Learning Opportunities

A Sampling of Opportunities Available to Rural Texans

Conferences, Events Around Texas

5th Annual UST Management & Compliance Assistance Seminar – Underground Storage Tank License A/B Installers should plan to attend the seminar on December 9, 2004, at the Red Lion Hotel in Austin, Texas. A reception will be held on December 8, 2004.

The seminar is sponsored by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the Industry Council on the Environment (ICE), the Texas Association of Storage Tank Professionals (TASTP), and the Texas Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association (TPCA).

The registration fee is \$100 for early registration (postmarked by November 23, 2004), and \$120 for regular registration. For more information contact Jeanne Cordell at 512-239-3846 or email at jcordell@tceq.state.tx.us, or contact Diane Stallings at 512-239-6333 or email at dstallin@tceq.state.tx.us.

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals' (TASSP) Fall Institute will be held on November 7-9, 2004, at the Renaissance Austin Hotel in Austin (Travis County), Texas. It's an opportunity for secondary school principals to learn best practices, gain new tools, attend career development and skills enrichment sessions, and network with colleagues. For more information, visit TASSP online at www.tassp.org/index.cfm.

Online Training for Water Operators

The Texas Rural Water Association (TRWA) and the Texas Association of Professional Water Operators (TAPWO) is offering online training courses for water and wastewater operators. The following courses are available via the Internet:

- Basic Water (\$175)
- Water Utility Safety (\$195)
- Chlorinator Systems and Chemical Handling (\$195)
- Pump and Motor Maintenance (\$195)

The courses are self-paced, accessible 24-hours a day and provide continuing education units (CEUs) for each completed course. Best of all, no travel is necessary. For more information, contact TRWA at 512-472-8591 or visit <http://www.trwa.org/>.

Agriculture Related

US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Toolkit for Colonias and Farmworker Practitioners provides good advice on how to establish a nonprofit organization, build housing for farmworkers, get approved to work with HUD on housing programs, find funding and research designated colonias in Texas. The toolkit is available online at www.hud.gov/local/shared/working/groups/frmwkcolntx/toolkit.cfm?state=tx.

Agricultural Diversification: Sustaining Rural Economies and Lifestyles - The Texas Department of Agriculture, the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Texas Cooperative Extension, are offering workshops on agricultural diversification and rural entrepreneurship. Topics include small business development, risk management, marketing and web design. For more information, call TDA at 877-428-7848. Workshops will be held in the following communities:

- Edinburg (Hidalgo County) - November 3
- Seguin (Guadalupe County) - November 9

Help for Seniors

Free physical for seniors starting Medicare – Seniors who start Medicare in 2005 are eligible for a free physical, courtesy of Medicare. Seniors who are already in the program will be eligible on January 1, 2005, to receive free diabetes and cholesterol tests. Call 1-800-MEDICARE for more information.

The Social Security Administration publishes the following free manuals for seniors:

How Work Affects Your Benefits – Explains how to report earnings to social security, as well as a

rule that may apply to first year recipients of Social Security benefits.

What Every Woman Should Know – Explains social security coverage for women who divorce, remarry or are widowed.

When You Retire from Your Own Business: What You Need to Know – Explains who qualifies as “retired” and what information seniors who are business owners need to give to the IRS.

Grant Writing Training

Governor's Office State Grants Team – The Governor's Office State Grants Team provides grant proposal writing training workshops that are designed to familiarize novice and intermediate-level proposal writers with aspects of proposal writing: funding research (federal, state, and private), how to plan projects that meet agency goals and constituent needs, and the “how-to's” on writing successful grant proposals.

Training will provide the tools to:

- Locate appropriate funding sources to fit program needs
- Understand proposal writing terminology
- Facilitate proposal development activities
- Design a proposal to fit their agency's needs
- Define program objectives
- Prepare a proposal budget
- Plan a program evaluation

For more information on the Governor's Office State Grants Team, call 512-463-8465 or visit www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/stategrants.

Upcoming workshops: ORCA is teaming up with the State Grants Team from the Governor's Office to offer the following training workshops. To register, or for more information on the workshops hosted by ORCA, contact Terry Boylan at ORCA. *There will be a registration fee of \$110 per person for each workshop to cover facility and other costs. Seating is limited to the first 35 paid registrants.*

December 7-9, 2004 – Nacogdoches

January 11-13, 2005 – Fort Stockton

February 8-10, 2005 – Alice

Northernmost Texas Nest of Least Grebes Discovered in Richland, Texas

By Tom Harvey, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

The most northerly least grebe nest ever recorded in Texas has been spotted at Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Hayden Haucke, a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist, was surprised to see two least grebe adults and five half-grown chicks last month while visiting a pond in the south unit of Richland Creek WMA, where least grebes were first seen this past spring.

This northerly sighting is highly unusual because the birds are a non-migratory species and are predominantly found south of the Nueces River in South Texas. There is only one record of a more northerly nest globally, reported in California in 1946.

The least grebe is a water bird that resembles a small duck and is dark gray with a bright yellow eye as its distinguishing marker. Least grebes can fly but do not migrate. Once settled into a particular

body of water, they generally do not move. While not rare, least grebes are sought after by ornithologists and birdwatchers, who travel to South Texas in order to pump up their life lists with species generally not found elsewhere in the United States.

“Least grebes breed almost any month of the year on the coast and in South Texas,” Cliff Shackelford, TPWD Nongame Ornithologist said. “The climate is typically mild and the environmental cue there is the water depths in the wetlands and resacas.”

Shackelford believes that the least grebe pair spotted at Richland WMA is likely a function of dispersal possibly in response to drought or overcrowding in the south. He is concerned though about the birds surviving when the first real cold front hits Texas this winter.

“Time will tell if they will survive there permanently or not,” Shackelford said.

The Richland Creek WMA is located east of the Richland-Chambers Reservoir dam in Freestone and Navarro Counties. The area is split into two units. The north unit is located north of US Hwy 287 and the south unit is accessible from FM 488.

The public is welcomed to go and see the rare bird. Visitors 17 years of age and older must possess a \$48 Annual Public Hunting Permit (APH) or a \$12 Limited Public Use Permit (LPU). Visitors who still have a Texas Conservation Passport may also enter the WMA until the pass expires. Entry to the WMA is permitted only during daylight hours and at designated entry sites.

For more information about Richland Creek WMA call 903-389-7080, or visit TPWD online at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/.

Source: August 16, 2004 news release from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

State Launches Two New Health and Human Services Agencies

By Stephanie Goodman, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) launched two new agencies, three new Internet sites and a new hotline on September 1, 2004, as part of a revitalized structure that will lead to improved services and lower administrative costs.

“We now have an organizational structure in place that will support our efforts to make it easier for Texans to find services,” Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Albert Hawkins said. “The consolidation of agencies also will generate administrative savings that can be redirected into services to help those in need.”

The reorganization is the result of House Bill 2292 from the 78th Texas Legislature. The legislation realigned similar functions of 12 existing health and human services agencies into four new departments under the oversight of the Health and Human Services Commission.

The final two new agencies – the Department of Aging and Disability Services and the Department of State Health Services – began consolidated operations on August 31, 2004. The Department of Family and Protective Services became the first new agency created under the reorganization on February 1, 2004. The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services began consolidated operations on March 1, 2004.

As part of the reorganization, the agencies launched three Internet sites on September 1, 2004 to help Texans learn more about their programs and missions:

- www.hhs.state.tx.us – This site brings together information about the hundreds of programs offered by the state’s health and human service agencies.
- www.dshs.state.tx.us – This Department of State Health Services website includes information about public health, mental health and substance abuse programs in the state.
- www.dads.state.tx.us – The new Department of Aging and Disability Services website provides information about services for older Texans and long-term care for people with physical disabilities and mental retardation.

In addition, HHSC has established a new hotline to provide the public with a centralized place to ask questions and register concerns about health and human services programs. The new number is 877-787-8999 or TDD 888-425-6889 for those with hearing impairments.

Source: Excerpt from a Health and Human Services Commission news release issued on August 31, 2004. Visit HHSC at www.hhs.state.tx.us/news/release/083104_Launches_Two_NewAgencies.shtml to read the complete article.

Life of a Rural Family Doctor

Director of PSAP Profiles 10 Graduates

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Dr. Howard K. Rabinowitz is a Professor of Family Medicine and Director of the Physician Shortage Area Program (PSAP) at Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His book, *Caring for the Country: Family Doctors in Small Rural Towns*, is a study of 10 PSAP graduates who practice family medicine in rural towns in Pennsylvania, New York and North Carolina.

The book provides insight into PSAP's ability to train doctors who commit their careers to rural medicine. PSAP graduates are eight times more likely than other graduates to practice rural family medicine. Dr. Rabinowitz's thorough case studies of the doctors' experiences reveal a realistic and complete picture of what it is like to be a doctor in a small town. By emphasizing the unique opportunity such doctors have to make a difference in their patients' lives, Dr. Rabinowitz explains why high-quality rural health care is not a lost cause.

Caring for the Country is a must-read for pre-med and medical school advisors, and medical students who are considering family medicine, but rural leaders should also read Dr. Rabinowitz's book to improve recruitment of dedicated family practice physicians.

Recent Rural Publications

Life 2.0: How People Across America Are Transforming Their Lives By Finding the Where of Their Happiness

By Rich Karlgaard

Karlgaard, the publisher of *Forbes* magazine, discusses the urban migration to small, rural townships.

Texas Trilogy: Life in a Small Texas Town

By Craig Hillis

Photography by Bruce Jordan

This story of Kopperl (Bosque County), Texas, is told in words and photos. Folk music by Stephen Fromholtz inspired the creation of the book.

Dairy Waste Management System Could Set Precedent

Brazos River Authority Monitors Broumley Dairy Project for Water Quality, Commercial Viability

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Texas dairy cattle produce 667 million gallons of milk annually, generating an economic impact of \$2.4 billion a year and making the state the number one milk producer in the South.

But there's a dark side to that story - on a good day, with proper nutrition, a typical dairy cow produces between 100 to 120 pounds of manure. The state is home to some 320,000 industrious dairy cows, raising the question - how many cows can live in a community and still be on good terms with their human neighbors?

"The goal of the project is really improvement of water quality. We are going to try to get 80 percent of the phosphorous out of the dairy's waste stream."

Efforts to improve the water quality in Erath County may help answer that question. In December 2002, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) found that the North Bosque River and Waco Lake, which supply drinking water to 200,000 residents, contain high levels of phosphorus. Waste from dairy farms is full of phosphorus because it is fed to dairy cattle as a supplement.

The Brazos River Authority (BRA) is monitoring a dairy waste management project at Broumley Dairy in Stephenville (Erath County) that could provide an economical way to remove the phosphorous from the dairy's waste before it reaches the North Bosque River. The project includes a methane digester that, when completed, will produce compost and convert manure to methane, which can be used to power the dairy and compensate for the cost of treating the waste.

"The goal of the project is really improvement of water quality," said Charlie Brown, strategic planning manager for the BRA. "We are going to try to get 80 percent of the phosphorous out

of the dairy's waste stream. The electricity will help offset the cost of the primary objective, to get out the phosphorous."

The BRA expects that the project will succeed in removing the phosphorous from the Broumley Dairy's waste stream. However, improving the North Bosque River by getting other dairies to use similar systems is still a matter of affordability for the dairy farmer.

"The farmer needs to make enough money on electricity to operate the (waste management) system and pay for it," added Brown.

Real World Laboratory

Joe Maley, Director of Organization at the Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) explained that the Broumley Dairy is functioning as a real world laboratory to test the potential for widespread use of the dairy waste management system. Only if the system is commercially viable will other dairy farmers be interested in using one on their farms.

"We are hoping to be able to sell two things out of the dairy — electricity and compost," said Maley. "The overriding goal is to take care of the dairy pollution, but can the farmer afford the system? It has to be commercially viable."

The project at Broumley Dairy will establish how many cows are needed and how much compensation dairy farmers must get for their electricity to make the waste management system a good investment.

For a period of two years, United Cooperative Services will meter the amount of electricity that the Broumley Dairy's methane digester adds to the grid, and will subtract that amount from the dairy's bill at a retail price of \$0.07 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). After that, the compensation rate will most likely drop to a wholesale rate of \$0.02-.04 per kWh.

Construction on the waste management system began in June 2004 and will be completed by the end of November. The BRA expects the Broumley Dairy to begin generating electricity by spring or summer of 2005.

Texas Big Game Awards Improve Ecosystem and Economy

With the 2004-05 hunting season in full swing, hunters in Texas are looking forward to the Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA), a program supported by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Wildlife Association. The TBGA encourages and rewards ethical hunting and habitat management by recognizing the hunters, landowners and land managers who conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat on Texas' private lands.

Because 97 percent of the land in Texas is privately owned, promoting responsible hunting and wildlife management is an important way to preserve a healthy ecosystem and ensure that the economic benefit generated by wildlife-associated recreation, which added \$10.9 billion to the state's economy in 2001, continues to be substantial. TBGA offers three awards programs open to hunters and land owners: Scored Entries, First Big Game Harvest and Youth Division. TBGA also awards \$20,000 in college scholarships yearly.

The Scored Entries category is open to hunters in eight geographic regions who harvest a white-tailed deer, mule deer, or pronghorn antelope. Hunters and landowners are eligible to receive recognition for entries scored according

to the Boone & Crockett Club (B&C) scoring system. Hunters of any age who harvest their first big game animal in Texas are eligible for the First Big Game Harvest category. Hunters who were younger than age 17 at the time they purchase their license are eligible for the Youth Division category.

\$20,000 College Scholarship Program

Beginning in November 2004, entering freshmen, sophomores and juniors may apply for the fifth annual \$20,000 TBGA Wildlife Conservation College Scholarship Program, available for the 2005-2006 school year. The scholarship program is sponsored by Carter's Country Outdoor Stores. Applications are due by March 1. For more information on the Texas Big Game Awards, entry information, or for a local certified TBGA scorer call 800-839-9453, ext. 114 or visit www.tbga.org/.

Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department news release issued September 7, 2004. For more information, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Mail-Order Services Harm Rural Pharmacies

Written by Audra Johnson, Texas Pharmacy Association

Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and insurance company cost incentives that encourage patients to send prescriptions to mail-order services are among rural pharmacist's chief complaints because they hurt small businesses and erode the one-on-one customer service ethic on which rural community pharmacies base their practices.

"It is unfair and frustrating when lifetime customers come into your store with tears in their eyes and say they can't trade with you anymore because they have to fill their prescriptions through mail-order," said Paul Barrentine, RPh, owner of Cedar Creek Pharmacy in Seven Points, Texas. "It's the erosion of the customer base and personal contact that saddens me."

As a rural community pharmacy owner, he takes pride in living and working with his patients to improve their quality of life. Barrentine's specialty skills in asthma treatment help him counsel and train patients in the management of their disease.

There are several independent and chain pharmacies in the area, but Barrentine claims, "they aren't my competition – my biggest threats are PBMs' low paying contracts, and unfair mail-order incentives."

Of great concern is the influence that PBMs will have on the 2006 Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit because of these unfair business practices. Ballentine shares these concerns with small business owners in rural communities across Texas.

"The satisfaction of being able to work for yourself and manage your own pharmacy is benefit enough to be a rural community pharmacist."

Pharmacists do not negotiate PBM contracts, it is a take it or leave it situation, much like the requirements of patients who must use mail-order for refills and maintenance medications instead of their community pharmacy.

Rural community pharmacies face these and other challenges. They also suffer from a lack of relief pharmacists due the shortage of pharmacists entering the field and those leaving due to the lack of interest in fighting PBM practices. Despite these challenges, Barrentine continues to take pride in his pharmacy and the opportunities that it provides him and his community.

"The satisfaction of being able to work for yourself and manage your own pharmacy is benefit enough to be a rural community pharmacist," said Barrentine.

Texas Pharmacy Week

The Texas Pharmacy Association hosts the first-ever Texas Pharmacy Week, October 17-23, 2004, in conjunction with American Pharmacists Month. This week is used to encourage Texans to talk with their pharmacists about using their medications safely and effectively.

Pharmacists have the knowledge to educate patients on successfully integrating medicines into their personal healthcare, including food intake, exercise, dietary supplements, and herbal products. The Association's campaign, "It's the People. Not the Pills," supports pharmacists as the most publicly accessible healthcare professional in the industry.

Texas Pharmacy Association is a professional association representing more than 3,500 members statewide. TPA serves all pharmacy professionals in the state through legislative representation, specialty continuing education sessions, recognition, and networking opportunities, and timely professional publications.

Wheat, Cattle Prices to Remain Strong in 2004

By Tim W. McAlavy, Texas A&M University Agriculture Program

Good news for wheat and cattle producers: Market prices for both commodities are expected to remain strong throughout the remainder of the year, according to a Texas Cooperative Extension economist.

“The good news for wheat producers is fewer US ending stocks and a lower predicted carryover,” said Steve Amosson, Extension economist-management based at Amarillo, speaking at a recent beef and forage meeting in Dimmitt. “Actual planted acres and yields turned out lower than USDA’s expectations.

“That means the national average wheat price this year is expected to be around \$3.50 per bushel, about 10 cents higher than current cash prices.”

The bad news is domestic food use of wheat has declined during the last five years, due in part to the current low-carb diet craze. At the same time, the amount of wheat for food use seems to have stabilized this year.

The United States accounts for only about 12 percent of the global wheat crop, an arena where the European Union, the former Soviet Union, China and India are the top wheat producers.

“Forty to 50 percent of the US crop goes into the export market. There are indications that foreign wheat production is up this year, which could dampen U.S. exports,” Amosson said. “That’s why it’s important to pay attention to global and domestic planting intentions, and to keep an eye on the export market at all times.”

Cattle producers should see strong market prices for the next two to three years, he said.

“A smaller US cattle inventory, strong domestic demand and the reopening of export markets in Japan and Korea will add strength to the cattle market,” Amosson said. “But the picture is not all upbeat.

Cheaper corn prices are leading to heavier carcass weights, resulting in more beef on the market. And if the Canadian market opens, there are indications that significant imports of fed beef and feeder cattle could occur.

“Extension economist Ernie Davis is now projecting 2005 cattle prices of \$83 to \$87 per

hundredweight for fed cattle, \$88 to \$94 per hundredweight for 700- to 800-pound feeder cattle and \$102 to \$112 for 500- to 600-pound feeder cattle.”

Even with strong prices predicted through 2005, Amosson reminded stocker cattle operators that advance pricing in January – through futures or forward contracts – holds more profit potential than selling stockers right off of winter pasture in March.

“There are indications that foreign wheat production is up this year, which could dampen US exports. That’s why it’s important to pay attention to global and domestic planting intentions, and to keep an eye on the export market at all times.”

“Remember also that it’s hard to justify grazing out a wheat crop when the market price is standing at \$3-plus per bushel. With that kind of grain price, it’s hard to make graze-out pay,” he said. “It is wise to know your break-even points, evaluate the graze-out option carefully and consider some form of price protection.

“But be cautious about how and when you lock in a price. Know the seasonality of your market.”

Extension’s market outlook for livestock and crops is available online at: <http://agecoext.tamu.edu/outlook/list.htm>. Information on farm policy, crop insurance, commodity budgets and marketing programs is available at: <http://agecoext.tamu.edu>.

Source: August 30, 2004 article in *AgNews* News and Public Affairs Texas A&M University Agriculture Program. Visit the Texas Cooperative Extension at Texas A&M University online at <http://agecoext.tamu.edu>.

Awards, Recognitions Around Rural Texas

The Texas Academy of Governance honored all five members of the Cuero Community Hospital Board of Directors with Trustee Recognition for their dedication to patient care. Cuero Community Hospital is the first hospital to have its entire board receive trustee recognition. Directors include Charles W. Papacek, James Conrad, Shirley Dietze, J. Mike Wheat and Richard Wheeler.

Winners of the Texas Department of Agriculture’s 2004 Quilt Block Competition: Carlene Wright Tomlan of Bastrop, Faith Marie Younse of Allen, Diana M. Shenberger of Denton, Nelda Wilcox of Holly Lake Ranch, Delores A. Holloway of Wylie, Ann W. Bailey of Sadler, the Midland 4-H of Midland, Alvena Armstrong of Bowie, Cecile Harton of Richardson, Debra Pittsinger of Oak Point, Alpha Benton of San Antonio, Iva Dell Miller of Quitman, Material Girls Quilt Guild of Mineola, Kay Cockerell and Hailey Kay Dods of Abilene, Nelma Ritchey and Teresa Loving of Colorado City, Florence Hoffman of Rio Medina, Pat Nunley of Pleasantown, Nikki Mahaffey of Jacksboro and Nelda Wilcox of Holly Lake Ranch.

American Hospital Association (AHA) presented Michael C. Waters, FACHE, CEO of Hendrick Health System in Abilene, with the Distinguished Service Award. Waters received the AHA’s highest honor for his lifetime commitment to service in the health care field and for his contributions to the people of Texas and Abilene.

Why Rural Communities Differ: Social Dynamics Give Some Clues

As different as night and day, small rural communities can be worlds apart. Underlying social factors help to explain the differences.

By Michael L. Holton, Center for Rural Affairs

Rural communities are a peculiar assemblage, and it is difficult to create a plan of action to help them all. Small rural communities are as different from each other as they are from their urban counterparts.

So, how do we as community developers and members work through these difficulties? The answer is to understand the social and human dynamics that make up a small community.

Studies of macro sociology reveal underlying dynamics that make up social structures and permit the community to become collectively alive. In the theory of social functionalism, each rural community has certain purposes and needs. It develops a collective conscience. Community institutions develop a functional interdependence that sets the social system in place.

Dr. Cornelia Flora's book, *Rural Communities*, explains this experience as bridging and bonding. Bonding is the ability for social structures to come together and become one voice. We look at others in our community as a mirror reflection and act accordingly. As a township we shape each other to create an image of who we are.

Bridging is a phenomenon that allows outside resources to come in. Many small rural communities have an extremely high bonding social structure but a particularly low bridging capacity. Newcomers are looked at with suspicion, and internal factions have conflicting views on changes they feel are good for the community. As a result, communities resist change.

The idyllic social structure for a community is when bridging and bonding are both high. This creates

an entrepreneurial social infrastructure, and these communities are poised for action and change.

Ideas from individuals are encouraged, and bringing outside resources to help with change is acceptable. These communities are receptive and usually diverse in both ideas and opinions. Citizens are included in decision making for the community.

Visit the Center for Rural Affairs online at www.cfra.org/, or contact Michael L. Holton at 402-687-2100, extension 1015, or email michaellh@cfra.org.

Source: Reprinted with permission from the Center for Rural Affairs. Article was first published in the May 2004 issue of the Center for Rural Affairs newsletter.

Forums Help Rural Communities Age Well

By Holly Riley, Texas Department of Aging and Disability

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) and the United Ways of Texas, in partnership with local United Ways agencies and area agencies on aging, are hosting a series of six Aging Well in Rural Texas forums in 2004. The purpose of the forums is to listen to the needs and concerns of older Texans in rural communities to:

- Identify the needs and concerns of older Texans in rural communities;
- Help rural communities assess their readiness for an aging population;
- Communicate public resources available to help older Texans prepare for an aging rural community.

The goal of the Aging Texas Well initiative is to help individuals prepare for aging in all aspects of life and create communities that support aging well throughout the lifespan. These forums are centered on the unique challenges of rural communities in meeting this goal. The Aging Well in Rural Texas forum agenda consists of panel discussions with representatives of the general public and with service providers and a discussion among community leaders.

Successful forums have already been held in Clarendon and Menard County, Texas. Other forums are scheduled as follows:

Deep East Rural Forum
Date: November 4
Location: Walker County

Capitol/Golden Crescent Rural Forum
Date: November 16
Location: Victoria

DADS supports older Texans and persons with disabilities with a comprehensive and cost effective service delivery system that promotes and enhances individual well-being, dignity and choice. DADS was established in September 2004 as a result of House Bill 2292 (78th Texas Legislature), which consolidated the following services and programs:

- Mental retardation services and state school programs of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- Community care, nursing facility and long-term care regulatory services of the Department of Human Services
- Aging services and programs of the Department on Aging

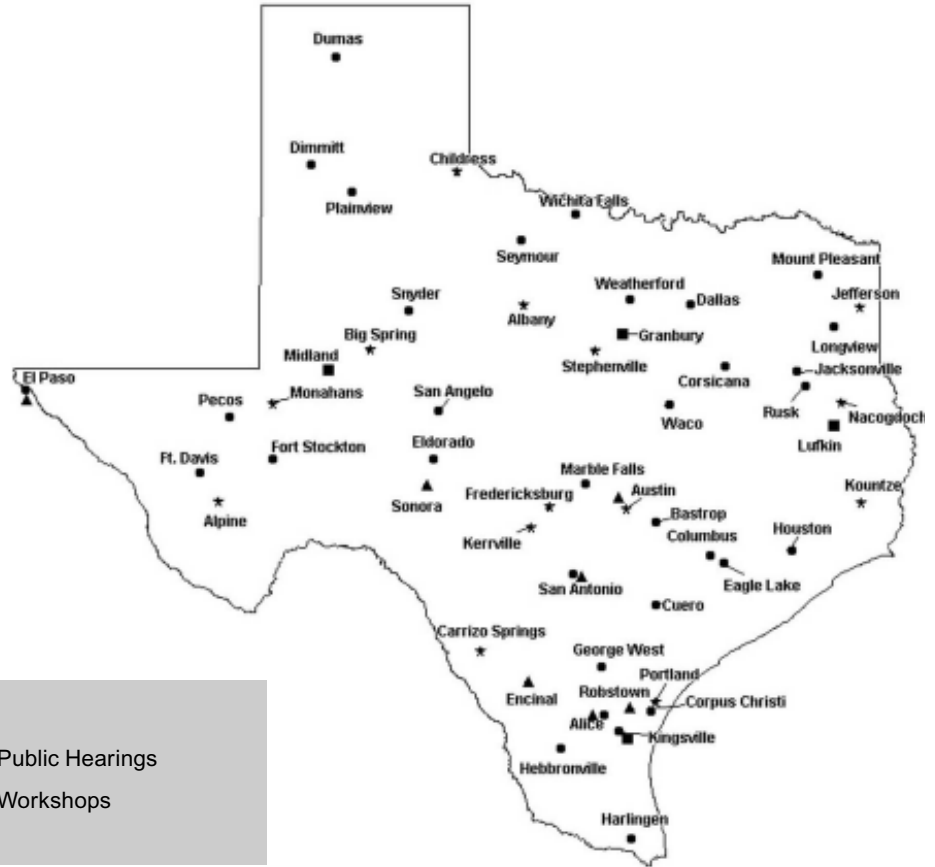
For further information, please contact Holly Riley at 512-438-4293 or email Holly.Riley@dads.state.tx.us.

Local Presence Keeps ORCA Connected to Rural Communities

ORCA is committed to maintaining a strong local presence in the rural communities it serves. The organization accomplishes this by distributing federal funding, assisting rural communities in administering funds and holding award ceremonies, public hearings, workshops, and Executive Committee meetings in rural communities.

Last quarter ORCA awarded a total of \$57,982,837 to rural communities statewide for the purpose of community development, infrastructure improvement, disaster relief, health care improvement, recruitment of health care professionals, emergency services equipment and training, water projects and other needs.

In addition to meeting in Austin, the Executive Committee has met in 13 rural communities throughout the state since January 2002. The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on December 2-3, 2004, in Rio Grande City (Starr County), Texas.



Map Key

- Award Ceremonies
- Public Hearings
- ★ Executive Committee Meetings
- ▲ Workshops

Texas Recycles Day

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Ever noticed how much trash you throw away in a day? About 7.3 pounds of trash go from your trashcan straight into the landfill, every day. The good news is the problem is easy to correct. Keep Texas Beautiful's Texas Recycles Day program suggests four easy-to-remember principles that begin with "R" (the Four Rs) to decrease the amount of trash you throw away: REDUCE the amount of waste you produce, REUSE materials (like glass and motor oil) that can be re-refined, RECYCLE materials to avoid the landfill and REBUY products that are made from recycled materials.

Texas Recycles Day encourages Texans to look for opportunities to apply the Four Rs so that they can decrease the amount of waste they generate, save energy and conserve natural resources. Texas Recycles Day will be held on November 15, 2004, with events beginning in mid-October. For more information, visit www.texasrecyclesday.org or call 800-CLEAN-TX.

Facts About Recycling

Texans spend nearly \$1.5 billion annually to dispose of more than 29 million tons of garbage.

Recycling and reuse industries employ more than four times the workforce of the waste management industry at higher average wages.

Consumer electronics account for only one percent of landfills by volume, but they contribute up to 70 percent of their toxic content.

Producing a can from recycled aluminum saves 95 percent of the energy required to make it from raw materials.

Source: Courtesy of the Keep Texas Beautiful Texas Recycles Day Program.

Community of Kennedy Ridge Nominated for Recognition by HUD

By Cynthia Vallejo, ORCA

In August 2004, ORCA nominated the Community of Kennedy Ridge, an unincorporated community in Travis County with a population of just over 400, for national recognition from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of the 30th anniversary of the CDBG program.

In March of 1999, the residents of the predominately Hispanic community initiated an effort to bring clean drinking water and sanitary sewer to Kennedy Ridge.

Many people were involved in bringing water and wastewater services to Kennedy Ridge, including community residents, ORCA's Texas Community Development Program (TCDP), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), a non-profit, and Travis County staff.

On March 10, 2000, after much hard work, Travis County was awarded a \$350,000 STEP fund grant through TCDP to provide sewer services for Kennedy Ridge.

Community member Miguel Esparza led the residents in their initiative. Three backhoe operators and dozens of volunteers from the community contributed numerous hours of hard work on the project.

Thanks to the persistence of the community and the ingenuity of the engineers, the funding

dollars were stretched to provide 46 first-time service hook-ups for residents.

In the second round of the project, TCDP provided two grants totaling \$700,000 to buy capacity for water storage, make improvements required by the TCEQ, upgrade lines and install new mains providing first-time service. The community is expected to complete the project by Christmas 2004.

"If labor provided by residents of Kennedy Ridge were not provided it would have cost \$1.4 million," said Travis County Precinct One Commissioner Ron Davis at the groundbreaking ceremony on July 29, 2004. "The community ought to embrace the residents of Kennedy Ridge for bringing about what everyone else takes for granted."

Texas STEP is a collaboration of state agencies and non-profits that work with local governments and community members to provide a new, volunteer-based approach to solving water and wastewater problems. For more information about this project or the Texas STEP method, contact ORCA.



Residents of Kennedy Ridge initiated the effort to bring water and wastewater services to their community. They also provided the labor to install 14,600 linear feet of pipeline.

TxDOT Assists Holiday Travelers on I-35

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is often available to lend a hand to travelers who might encounter problems along rural sections of I-35 in Bell, McLennan and Hill counties during holiday travel. Department crews will assist with minor problems, but are not prepared to handle major mechanical repairs.

TxDOT offers this program during the Thanksgiving holiday period, on Christmas when it falls on or near a weekend, and on the 4th of July, Memorial Day and the Texas/OU Football weekend. TxDOT reminds motorists to drive the posted speed limits, buckle up and don't drink and drive.

Source: Source: Texas Department of Transportation news release issued on September 1, 2004.

TxDOT Highway Facts

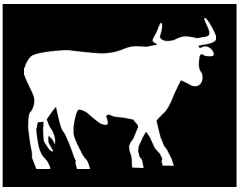
More than 77,000 miles of state-maintained roadway spread out across the state.

The longest bridge in Texas, the Queen Isabella Causeway, is 2.37 miles long. It links Port Isabel and South Padre Island.

Loop 168 in Tehana (Shelby County) takes the prize for the shortest highway at a mere 391 feet long.

The busiest section of rural Interstate is I-35 between San Antonio and Dallas-Ft. Worth.

Source: Texas Department of Transportation. For more information visit www.dot.state.tx.us/txdot.htm.



Living in Rural Texas!

Panhandle Antiques and East Texas Tomatoes

Childress County

By the Honorable Jay Mayden, Childress County Judge

Known as a gateway to the Panhandle, Childress County is located in the southeast corner of the Texas Panhandle at the crossroads of US 83 and US 287 and covers an area of 710 square miles. The county was named after George C. Childress, author of the Texas Constitution.

A trip to Childress can be rewarding to anyone. Childress offers several antique stores. While you are in Childress be sure and stop at the Childress County Heritage Museum. If it is fishing you enjoy, come visit Baylor Lake, known as "Big Bass Lake."

The county also offers excellent hunting opportunities, from deer to quail. Take the kids to Fair Park where they can play and mom and dad can sit and enjoy the peace and quiet in a beautiful surrounding.

Childress County offers several attractions throughout the year. In August we host the Texas Big Game Awards Banquet. December is Christmas in the Park, and of course in July, do not forget to come see the Old Settlers Rodeo.

Above all else, Childress County's best resource and reason for stopping in is the people. Texas is known as a friendly state, and the citizens of Childress County only reinforce that image.

Cherokee County

By The Honorable Chris Davis, Cherokee County Judge

Cherokee County is located in the central portion of East Texas, bounded on the west by the Neches River and for 30 miles on the east by the Angelina River. In spring the area bursts into a bouquet of dogwood, wisteria and azalea blooms painting the country with their brilliant colors.

Measuring 50 miles north and south and 30 miles east and west across the middle, the county contains 1,049 square miles of broken terrain. In some sections the hills approach the dignity of small mountains with an elevation of more than 750 feet. One chain eight miles east of the Neches River extends almost the length of the county. The river bottomland in the southern part of the county descends to an elevation of 250 feet.

Cherokee County has a rich history dating back to the first Spanish explorers who traveled the El Camino Real to establish missions along the

Neches River. The Caddo Indians lived here for many years before the arrival of the Spaniards, and their burial and ceremonial mounds are still a favorite spot for tourists who visit the Caddoan Mounds State Park just west of the town of Alto.

Cherokee County is home to the Texas State Railroad. Visitors come to ride the old steam train though the scenic forests and river bottoms of East Texas and to enjoy the lake and RV park at the depot in Rusk. The train has been the setting for several Hollywood movies and documentaries.

Jacksonville is Cherokee County's largest city and home to several large industries. It is also home to the annual Tomato Festival, which commemorates the country's once vibrant tomato industry. Two great medical facilities are located in the city and do a great job of taking care of the health needs of the county's greatest asset, its people.

If you are in search of a slower pace and a less hectic lifestyle, then Cherokee County is the place to visit and enjoy the hospitality of some of the nicest folks around.

Reprinted with permission from the September 2004 issue of *County Progress*. Edited by Julie Anderson, *County Progress*.

Rural Lifestyle All the Rage for Ex-Suburbanites

By Julie V. Kelly, ORCA

Tired suburbanites are looking for a fresh start, and they are finding it in exurbia – the new name for the small, rural towns often clustered along the highways that connect major cities to vacation destinations. Drawn by low tax rates, better prices on land and housing, and the desire to slow down, people are fleeing congested, older suburbs in search of an idealized, small-town lifestyle.

Located beyond the city and suburbs, exurbs share certain characteristics that make them appealing places to move to. They offer a reasonable commute to

employment, but they are also well-planned residential areas with plenty of wide-open spaces and a strong sense of community.

The migration away from metropolitan areas has been going on for at least 20 years but has increased in the last five to 10 years. Jobs and technology are two changing factors that have spurred the increase. Manufacturing centers are increasingly choosing to locate in exurban areas, and approximately one-fifth of the US gross manufacturing product now comes from these areas.

Technology has contributed to the growth of exurban areas as cell phones and the Internet make long-distance commerce feasible and advances in water quality and other public services make it easier for larger populations to live in remote areas.

But will this influx of escaped suburbanites be good for the exurbs? New residents will pay their taxes and send their children to school, but will they embrace the small town ideals of their new home? One thing is for sure – change is coming to exurbia.

CDBG Celebrates 30 years of Community Improvement

(Continued from page 1)

communities with Community Development Excellence Awards for their outstanding work in using CDBG funds to improve communities and help lower income citizens. HUD commended the state of Texas for dedicating 12.5 percent of its CDBG funds to improve conditions in the colonias. States that share a border with Mexico are required by law to set aside as much as 10 percent of their CDBG funds for colonias. HUD also commended ORCA for coordinating and delivering CDBG funds and other resources so that colonia residents get the maximum benefit from such funds.

Other recipients include the state of Virginia; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Wheeling, West Virginia; Sheboygan, Wisconsin; Yuma, Arizona; Portland, Oregon; Los Angeles County, California; St. Paul, Minnesota; Pharr, Texas; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Jacksonville/Duval County, Florida; Wichita, Kansas; and Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

“These communities are outstanding examples of how CDBG works,” said HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson. “In a climate where results and performance count, these communities, and many others like them, are doing wonderful work building better neighborhoods and creating greater opportunities for their lower income residents.”

Success Stories Posted on CDBG Web Site

As part of the program’s anniversary celebration, HUD has published the success stories of numerous communities that used funding from the CDBG program to accomplish exceptional improvement projects. The web site features 14 projects in the following Texas locations: College Station (Brazos County), Conroe (Montgomery County), Denton (Denton County), El Paso (El Paso County), Fort Bend County, Garland (Bowie County), Harris County, Killeen (Bell County), Midland (Midland County), Montgomery County, New Braunfels (Comal County), Sugar Land (Fort Bend County), Port Arthur (Jefferson County) and Waco (McLennan County). ORCA nominated the community of Kennedy Ridge in Travis County for national recognition by HUD as a CDBG program community (see related story on page 20).

Source: HUD news release issued on September 13, 2004. For more information, visit www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/cdbg30/successstories.cfm.

Texas Game Warden’s Top 10 Check-List for Hunters

1. Take the hunter education course and carry your certification card with you in the field; visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/edu/ for a listing of courses.
2. Review the Outdoor Annual and check for open season dates and bag limits for the county you are hunting.
3. Check for legal means and methods in the county you are hunting.
4. Carry your current hunting license as this may have your hunter education number listed below your name and address.
5. Clearly identify your target before pulling the trigger.
6. Carry a sharp knife; cut out the date (month and day) of kill on deer and turkey tags and immediately after kill, attach appropriate tag to the deer or turkey.
7. Carry a ball-point pen; fill out ranch and county name on back of deer and turkey tags, and don’t forget the deer log on the back of the license.
8. Carry a state driver’s license or state personal identification certificate if you are 17 years of age or older.
9. Fill out a Wildlife Resource Document to accompany any wildlife resource, or part of a deer or turkey that you give to someone else.
10. Keep all game animals and game birds in an edible condition.

*As an additional safety precaution, always point the muzzle in a safe direction, and keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.

For more information, contact Kristen Everett, (512) 389-8046, kristen.everett@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Source: Excerpt from a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department news release issued August 30, 2004. To read the complete article, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news/news/040830c.phtml.

Want to E-mail ORCA?

To e-mail a member of the ORCA staff, address the message to the staff member’s first initial and full last name@orca.state.tx.us.

For example, to e-mail Julie V. Kelly use jkelly@orca.state.tx.us.

Just want to send comments to the agency in general?

Send your e-mail to orca@orca.state.tx.us.



ORCA Program Activities

ORCA Requests \$194,306,854 for FY 2006-07 Biennium

By David Flores, ORCA

On August 27, 2004, ORCA submitted its Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) to the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), requesting \$194,306,854 in funding for the fiscal year 2006-07 biennium.

In compliance with the Governor's Office and Legislative Budget Board mandate to submit LAR requests for the 79th Legislative Session at a 95 percent funding level for general revenue related funds, ORCA's request incorporated a five percent (\$661,203) reduction of general revenue funds. The request shows that ORCA is funded 93 percent (\$180 million) from federal sources, 4.5 percent (\$8.2 million) from state general revenue sources and 2.5 percent (\$6.1 million) from general revenue-dedicated and other funds.

To cut expenses, ORCA has proposed cutting administrative and operating expenses including administrative contracts with the Texas Department

of Agriculture and the Councils of Government. The reduction will also result in a reduced number of capital improvement grants awarded to rural hospitals through the Rural Health Facility Capital Improvement General Revenue-Dedicated Fund.

ORCA included six exceptional items in the LAR:

Reinstatement of the mandated five percent reduction: ORCA requested that the legislature restore the five percent funding reduction on the grounds that the agency makes good use of federal funds and operates efficiently. The loss of five percent of the general funds would harm ORCA's ability to help rural communities manage community development and maintain health care accessibility.

Relocation of staff outside of Travis County: ORCA asked for \$360,100 for the biennium to move one-half of its staff to rural communities so

that rural citizens could be better served.

Funding to pay for mandated audit/oversight services: ORCA requested \$45,000 for each year of the biennium to cover the costs of training and audits required by federal and state agencies.

Building leadership capacity: ORCA sought \$350,000 for each year of the biennium to train local community leaders on a variety of issues.

Recruitment and retention of the rural health workforce: ORCA asked for \$1 million for each year of the biennium and one full time employee to assist rural communities in the recruitment and retention of health care professionals.

Assistance for the border area: ORCA requested \$5 million for each year of the biennium to provide capacity training, local grant writing training and entrepreneurship training to residents in rural and border communities.

ORCA's TCDP Workshops Assist Grant Recipients

By Mary Alice Smith, ORCA

This summer ORCA staff conducted three workshops to help rural cities and counties that received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds implement Texas Community Development Program (TCDP) projects. The workshops were held in Palestine (Anderson County) on June 30th, Levelland (Hockley County) on July 14th, and Alice (Jim Wells County) on August 20th.

During the workshops the staff presented each chapter of the 2004 edition of the TCDP Implementation Manual and provided information for complying with the TCDP contract conditions. The 2004 Implementation Manual is available in print and CD-ROM and accessible on ORCA's website, at www.orca.state.tx.us/cdbg/implementation%20manual/index.htm.

Steve Swango, Manager of Implementation and Management Services, lead the ORCA team. Presenters included ORCA Rural Service Coordinators Julie Hartley, Joe Midura, Mary Alice Smith, Steve Mendoza, and Refugio Negrete. Theresa Cruz, Director of Performance and Outcomes, and accountant Daniel Limas also made presentations.



Staff and administrators for the TCDP grant recipients in attendance at the Implementation Workshop in the city of Alice (Jim Wells County), Texas.

Subscription Renewal Notice

Attention all readers of *The Rural Texan*!

A restriction in the General Appropriations Act prohibits us from continuing to mail this newsletter to individuals unless they indicate their desire to continue receiving it.

Please let us know if you wish to continue receiving this newsletter by filling out the form below and returning this page to ORCA at 512-936-6776. You may also visit us online at www.orca.state.tx.us and fill out the "ORCA Information Sharing Service" form, or mail the form below to: **The Rural Texan**, Office of Rural Community Affairs, PO Box 12877, Austin, TX 78711.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Community / Economic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Government employee (i.e., federal, state, or local) | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation related |
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