

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
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Contacts For LRGVDC Administered Programs

Kenneth N. Jones, Jr. Executive Director	Ann Lyles Director, Finance
Anna Hernandez Director, Human Resources	Terrie Salinas Director, Economic Development
Joe González Director, Area Agency on Aging	Sandra Boyd Director, Homeland Security and Regional Training
Andrew Canon Director, Hidalgo County MPO	Manuel Flores Director, Transit Services

Mission Statement

“ENCOURAGE AND PERMIT LOCAL UNITS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO JOIN AND COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR ECONOMIC INTERESTS, CITIZEN GROUPS AND GROUPS EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC DISTRESS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THEIR CITIZENS AND TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION”

REGIONAL PURSUITS

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Ken Jones, Executive Director
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
311 N. 15th St., McAllen, Texas 78501-4705
E-Mail- info@lrgvdc.org • website - www.lrgvdc.org

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REGIONAL PURSUITS

State Officials Recognize Lower Rio Grande Valley Area's 6.5 Million Grant Offers

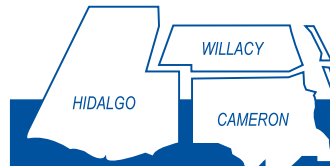
The Office of Rural Community Affairs (ORCA) held a ceremonial check presentation event honoring 21 area grant recipients at the October 27th, 2005, LRGVDC Board of Directors Meeting. Grant recipients received a total of \$6,528,516 in grants from ORCA between September 1, 2004 and August 31, 2005.



Happy Holidays
from the
Board of Directors
and
Staff
of the **LRGVDC**

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Texas Recycles Week

Local Municipalities celebrate "Texas Recycles Week," November 14th through 18th, 2005. Communities use these events as an opportunity to raise public awareness on the economic and environmental benefits of waste reduction and recycling. Events were held throughout the three county Region. Some of the events included the City of Brownsville's trash bash and art contest. The City of Harlingen held a recycler contest. The City of McAllen scheduled field trips for students from various school districts to tour the Recycling Center; plant seedlings with the use of compost and recycled peat pots; "Recycling Survivor Challenge" featuring an obstacle course; and presented good bags for all attendees. The City of Edinburg also scheduled field trips for students and featured a puppet show, fun games, arts and crafts and a tour.

McAllen Recycling Center



Edinburg Recycling Center



Assistant Secretary on Aging Josefina Carbonell Comes to McAllen

Assistant Secretary Carbonell addressed the over 200+ seniors attending a Medicare Part D event held on November 17th at the Las Palmas Community Center in McAllen. Assistant Secretary Carbonell heads the Administration on Aging at the National level in Washington D.C. . The event sponsored by the La Joya Senior Citizens Center, UTPA Center on Health and Aging, National Hispanic Council on Aging, and the LRGV Area Agency on Aging. The event pointed out the importance of the new Medicare prescription coverage and to encourage seniors to enroll in the service. The Area Agency on Aging's Public Benefits Technician, Ronnie Alegria, provided an online enrollment demonstration to the of the program and informed the attendees on the appropriate steps to take.

For more information on the Medicare Part D or to schedule a presentation, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 956-682-3481, 1-800-365-6131, or aging@lrgvdc.org.



Assistant Secretary on Aging Josefina Carbonell addressing seniors at the recent Medicare Part D event at the Las Palmas Community Center.

Senior Centers Raise Funds for Katrina and Rita Victims

Three Senior Centers and one Adult Day Care Center in the Rio Grande Valley took it upon themselves to raise funds to assist the Cenla Area Agency on Aging in Alexandria, Louisiana and the Deep East Texas Area Agency on Aging in Jasper, Texas. These Area Agencies on Aging and their surrounding Area Agencies on Aging were affected by either Hurricane Katrina or Rita. Their efforts raised \$1,150 to be divided between both Area Agencies on Aging to help them provide service services to seniors in their communities. The participating centers were the La Joya Senior Center, Alton Senior Center, Casa De Amigos Harlingen, and Momentos Felices Adult Day Care Center. The La Joya Senior Center raised over \$800 in one afternoon by the Seniors themselves.

The Staff of the Area Agency on Aging would like to extend its appreciation to the seniors in these centers for their concerns of their peers in those affected areas.



Seniors from the La Joya Senior Center and Alton Senior Center during the Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita Benefit kickoff. Also pictured with the Group is Rosalva Cantu, Manager for the Alton Senior Center and Jose L. Gonzalez, Director of Area Agency on Aging.

First Annual South Texas Caregiver Conference held in South Padre Island

The Area Agency on Aging held its first Annual Caregiver Conference in South Padre Island, November 6th-8th at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Hotel. Attendees and presenters came from Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, various parts of Texas. Topics presented at the conference ranged from stress management to best practices on providing services to grandparents raising their grandchildren. The Conference would not have been possible without the support of the corporate sponsors, exhibitors and attendees. Plans are being worked on for the Second Annual Conference.



Grace McKinnon, opening speaker at the South Texas Caregiver Conference in South Padre Island sponsored by the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging.

Boyd Selected for National Task Force

Sandy Boyd, LRGVDC Director of Homeland Security and Training, was selected to serve on the Advisory Committee to the National Task Force on Community Preparedness and Response.

The Advisory Committee held its formation meeting in Washington DC during the week of November 16th. Representatives from Fire, Police, Infrastructure, Private Business, and Community leaders from across the United States met to help create a plan or template for America's local government and community leaders to better assist their communities resources to strengthen Homeland Security. Ms. Boyd will serve on the Infrastructure/Economic Sub Committee.

This Advisory Committee is chaired by the Honorable James Gilmore III, Past Governor of Virginia (1998-2002) Chairman of the National Council on Readiness and Preparedness.

Regional meetings will be held in 2006 to identify the best and most successful practices that can be part of a national template to help guide and enable counties to quickly adopt, modify or improve techniques for their own use; and then develop a way to better communicate and share these ideas and practices among municipalities as well as with the private sector and community organizations.

Regional Police Academy News

The 113th Basic Peace Officer Academy is set to begin on January 13, 2006. Applications are now being accepted for the program which is a part time/night session academy. The training will be held at the LRGVDC Regional Police Academy in Harlingen. Classes will be held Monday through Thursday from 6:00PM to 10:00PM and Saturdays from 6:00AM to 5:00PM.

The 114th Basic Peace Officer Academy is scheduled to begin on April 14, 2006. This program will be a day full time academy to be conducted Monday through Friday from 8:00AM — 5:00PM at the Harlingen facility. The application process will begin in February 2006 for this training.

For further information on training contact Oscar Maldonado at 956-364-4507.

Regional Homeland Security Effort

The Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) has requested the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council to develop an Implementation Plan and a Regional Response Plan for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region. The purpose of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Response Plan is to assist jurisdictions to establish a Regional Coordination Center with the necessary operational components to provide an overwhelming regional response to a catastrophic incident(s), especially one that overwhelms the individual jurisdictional capabilities. These two plans will synchronize a preparedness program that has a "Single Focus" and "Unity of Effort" that fully supports the Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan. The Homeland Security Division is in the process of developing a working group from local, state, and federal agencies to work together on the Regional Response Plan. The Regional Planning Working Group (RPWG) is a mandatory working group that will make decisions on regional response issues and will set prioritization of resource deployment, operational plans, procedures, and implementing documents that support the states goals of prevention, protection, response, and recover for the citizens of the Lower Rio Grande Valley from any catastrophic incident(s).

