

Combes Mayor Silvestre Garcia Elected LRGVDC Board President



Outgoing Board President Ricardo Rodriguez of San Juan (left) was recognized with a plaque presented by newly elected Board President Silvestre Garcia of Combes (right) at the June LRGVDC Board session. Mr. Rodriguez was honored for his service over the past year. He remains a member of the LRGVDC Executive Committee.

Mayor Silvestre Garcia of Combes, Texas, was unanimously elected Board President of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council at the May meeting.

"I am honored to have been elected as your new President, and I will continue the momentum created by Past Presidents of the

organization. The most effective method to address needs of the Rio Grande Valley is a regional approach, and the LRGVDC will continue to be a leader in this regard," Mayor Garcia said at his seating ceremony.

Board officers will be elected at the July Board of Directors meeting. Other current board officers are: Hidalgo County Commissioner Sylvia Handy - 2nd Vice-President; Superintendent, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District Arturo Guajardo - Secretary; Norma G. Garcia - Treasurer; and, City of San Juan Mayor Pro-Tem Ricardo Rodriguez, Immediate Past President.

Other members of the current LRGVDC Board include: Judge Gilberto Hinojosa, Cameron County; Judge Simon Salinas, Willacy County; Commissioner Victor Perez, City of Alamo; Mayor Pro-Tem Carlos A Cisneros, City of Brownsville; Mayor Ricardo Morales, City of Donna; Councilman Ricardo Rodriguez, Jr., City of Edinburg; Mayor John David Franz,



Also honored for his service over the past years to the LRGVDC Board during the June meeting was former Commissioner Ric Godinez of McAllen (left). Newly elected LRGVDC Board President Silvestre Garcia made the presentation.

City of Hidalgo; Mayor Joel Quintanilla, City of Mercedes; Commissioner John Ingram, City of McAllen; Mayor Norberto "Beto" Salinas, City of Mission; Mayor Leo "Polo" Palacios, Jr., City of Pharr; Mayor Joe Alexandre, City of Raymondville; Mayor Pro-Tem Johnny E. Cuellar, City of Weslaco; Dr. J. Gilbert Leal, President, TSTC; Gale Armstrong, El Jardin Water Supply Corp.; Michael G. Wilson, Willacy County Navigation District; Don Medina, Member-at-Large; La Feria Mayor Lalo Sosa, Member-at-Large; and Arturo Ramirez, Grassroots Organization Representative.

The LRGVDC Board meetings are normally held the last Thursday of each month at Harlingen City Hall, Harlingen, Texas at 1:30 p.m.

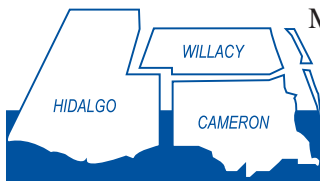
LRGVDC Homeland Security Activities

WMD Training: The Homeland Security Support office of the LRGVDC is coordinating a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) 6-hour basic level awareness class (AWR-160) for agencies and jurisdictions in the region. The class is coordinated on behalf of the DHS/Office of Domestic Preparedness, and is offered at no cost to local jurisdictions through the end of September, 2005, when all first responders are required to have completed the training.

The instruction is geared for anyone who has a role in the planning, response and/or recovery situation in a WMD event. That includes service personnel from law enforcement, fire, hazardous material handlers, emergency medical services, emergency management, public works, public health, health care, public safety, communications and government administrators.

For additional information contact Manuel Cruz, Program Administrator; Joe Roman or Ivonne Garza at 956-682-3481.

Amber Alert Plan: The Regional Amber Alert plan is in developmental stages throughout Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties. The plan becomes the fiftieth on-line connection in Texas. Amber Alert is managed and operated by the Texas Department of Public Safety, and the regionally activated Amber Alert will reduce the amount of time required to disseminate vital information to the public in the immediate area of a reported abduction. It will act as immediate and localized broadcaster and will be followed by a wider area



blanketing of information provided to the statewide system. For further information please contact the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council at info@lrgvdc.org.

Citizens Corp Council: The Citizen's Corp Council will host a Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Train-The-Trainer Program from August 9-12, 2005 at the LRGVDC Police Academy Training Center located at 1902 N. Loop 499, Building K, Harlingen, Texas. For more information please contact Jackie Morales-Cantu at jmorales@lrgvdc.org.

Law Enforcement Training Center: On June 16, cadets of the 109th Basic Peace Officer Academy were featured in local television news on Channel 4. They presented toys, food and other articles to the Rocha family of Alamo. The Rocha family was victim of a drive by shooting in which a 6 year old boy was injured and is still being treated at a local hospital. The cadets heard of the needs of the family and took up a collection of items they felt would come in handy during the family's recovery process.

LRGVDC Border Health Initiatives

Tri-National MMRS Conference on Cross-Border Collaboration: The LRGV-MMRS will host the first Tri-National MMRS Conference on Cross-Border Collaboration among the United States, Mexico and Canada, October 26-29, 2005 at the Four Seasons Sheraton Hotel in McAllen, Texas.

Registrations are being handled by event coordinator Elaine Hernandez, Director of Border Health at the LRGVDC. For information about attending, participating or adding suggestions to the conference platforms, contact Ms. Hernandez at ehernandez@LRGVDC.ORG or call 956-607-6443.

The conference will cover best practices and challenges to crossing jurisdictional lines in an emergency, ethical issues related to treating mass casualties with scarce resources, strengthening MMRS identity, enhancing relationships among the 125 US MMRS expected to attend and showcase LRGV-MMRS to national and border jurisdictions.

Maquiladoras Support Tuberculosis Initiatives: The Reynosa Regional Maquiladora Assn. has formed a Health, Safety and Environmental sub-committee charged with standardizing protocols in diagnosing and treating tuberculosis within the maquiladoras along the US-Mexico border in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region. Dr. Gerardo Garcia heads up this new sub-committee.

The maquiladora Emerson Electric, in collaboration with the Rotary Clubs in Reynosa, purchased an X-ray machine for the Hospital Civil. Also the maquiladora

NIBCO purchased three motorcycles for the Jurisdicción Sanitaria IV in Reynosa for the health outreach workers to deliver medications to patients in the community. A



Motorcycles were donated to the Health Jurisdicción IV by the Maquiladora NIBCO and presented by the NIBCO Office Manager, Ms. Maritza Gutierrez. The transportation is used to assist health outreach workers deliver Tuberculosis medications to patients in the community.

TB protocols handbook is being prepared by a taskforce of medical providers and government health officials that can be used in training. The LRGV-AHEC is assisting with the preparation of this handbook.

LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging Events

Centenarian Recognition: On May 3, the Area Agency on Aging held its Eighth Annual Centenarian Recognition, themed "Celebrating Long-Term Living", at Mercedes. This annual event is held as part of Older Americans Month. The Lower Rio Grande Valley has over 175 individuals aged 100+ years. In attendance were 16 centenarians who ranged in age from 101 to 109 years old. "Elvis" was in the house providing the entertainment as the centenarians celebrated "The Rockin' 50's".

Foster Grandparent Program: The Foster Grandparent Program held its Annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet May 13 in Mercedes, Texas. The Foster Grandparents were given recognition for their service in addressing the lives of children with exceptional and special needs.

Foster Grandparent Program celebrated Older Americans Month by sponsoring the First Annual "Aging Well in the Valley" Health Fair, at the Knapp Conference Center in Weslaco. Approximately 50 to 75 people met with various agencies about services they had to offer. Blood pressure and diabetes screening were also provided. Some of the agencies present were Criterion Home Health, Charity Home Health, Palm Valley Home Health, Affectionate Home Health, South Texas Women's Center, Joli's Shoes, V.I. P. Home Health, R.E.A.C.H Promotoras, Medical Innovations, Area Agency on Aging, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Senior Companion Program, Silver Ribbon Community Partners, Social Security and Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. The R.E.A.C.H. Promotoras staff involved the participants in a low impact exercise routine.

The LRGVDC Foster Grandparent Program, is funded by the Corporation for National Service. Its purpose is to provide low-income seniors the opportunity to remain

active in their community by providing them with a small stipend to be volunteers. As a volunteer in the program the Foster Grandparents are assigned to children with special and exceptional needs. This intergenerational program allows the Foster Grandparents to provide mentorship, guidance, one-to-one attention, and support. For more information regarding the program contact Sylvia Yanes, Program Administrator at 956-682-3481 or at syanes@lrgvdc.org.

Medicare Benefits Legal Awareness Presentations: Adult Day Care Centers throughout the Valley hosted awareness presentations over the last few months in an effort to provide Senior Citizens information on the upcoming changes in Medicare Benefits. The major emphasis has been on the new Medicare Part D, the new benefit that will provide a prescription drug benefit. The Area Agency on Aging has teamed up with the National Hispanic Council on Aging thru the La Joya Senior Citizens' Center to provide information at events being held throughout Cameron County, such as the Cameron-Willacy County Community Projects Health Fair held in Port Isabel in June. More events are being scheduled for the Summer and Fall. For more information on these public benefits or for presentations, contact Veronica Alegria at 956-682-3481 or valegria@lrgvdc.org.

LRGVDC Director of Area Agency goes to Washington: Congressman Lloyd Doggett has named Jose L. Gonzalez, LRGVDC Director of Area Agency on Aging one of three Texas delegates to the White House Conference on Aging scheduled for 2006. The White House Conference on Aging is held every ten years and is an event that focuses on issues and challenges facing our seniors now and the future. Recommendations developed at the Conference will provide guidance to the President and Congress on setting priorities in addressing senior issues. The Area Agencies on Aging from the Lower Rio Grande Valley, South Texas and Middle Rio Grande co-sponsored an Independent Aging Agenda Event in support of the White House Conference on Aging on June 2. Attendees discussed issues and provided recommended solutions on two national policy agendas - "Planning along the Life Span" and "My Community". This information will be developed into a report that will be submitted to the White House Conference on Aging office and will also be used for the Texas White House Conference on Aging event being held on July 11th. The TxDot District office in Pharr will be one of nine regional sites for the July 11th event. The Texas event will be held from 1:30 to 4:30 in the afternoon. For more information, please contact the Area Agency on Aging office at 956-631-4670.

LRGVDC Calendar of Upcoming Events

Jul 11-12 "Operation Valley Preparedness 2005" sponsored by the LRGV-MMRS. Contact Susan Scott-Vargas, sscott@lrgvdc.org for further information.

Jul 15 Registration for Citizens Advisory Committee that will support transportation issues and planning efforts at the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Contact hempo@lrgvdc.org or call 956-618-0803.

Jul 28 Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m., City Hall, Harlingen, Texas. Contact info@lrgvdc.org for further information.

Aug 2 WMD Training for LRGV-MMRS Management Team "AMA's Core Disaster Life Support Course". Contact sscott@lrgvdc.org for registration.

Aug 3 First meeting of the newly-forming Citizens Advisory Committee that will support transportation issues and planning efforts at Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Contact hempo@lrgvdc.org or call 956-618-0803.

Aug 9-12 Citizens Corp Council Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Train-The-Trainer program for local residents. LRGVDC Police Academy Training Center located at 1902 N. Loop 499, Building K, Harlingen, Texas. For more information please contact Jackie Morales-Cantu at jmorales@lrgvdc.org.

Aug 25-26 2005 South Texas Opportunities Conference: Contracting, Texas State Technical College, 1902 North Loop 499, Harlingen, Texas 78550. Register via internet at www.stxbixopps.com

Aug 25 Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m. in Harlingen, Texas City Hall. Contact info@lrgvdc.org for further information.

Sep 13 Regular meeting of the LRGV-MMRS Management Team, 10 a.m.-12 noon, Texas DSHS, Rockport Room, 601 W. Sesame, Harlingen

Sep 29 Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m. in Harlingen, Texas City Hall. Contact info@lrgvdc.org for further information.

Jul – Sep Weapons of Mass Destructive Awareness Training (AWR-160). Open to all jurisdictions. For additional information contact Manuel Cruz, program administrator; Joe Roman or Ivonne Garza at 956-682-3481.

Oct 26-29 MMRS Tri-National (US, Canada, Mexico) Conference on Cross-Border Collaboration, McAllen, Texas. Local first responders and first receivers are encouraged to participate. For further information, contact Elaine Hernandez at ehernandez@lrgvdc.org

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Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
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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

REGIONAL PURSUITS is the newsletter published by the LRGVDC. This publication is financed in part through funding assistance from State and Federal grants. REGIONAL PURSUITS is available without cost and inquires should be directed to:

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