

# Regional Pursuits

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## Building PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) in the Valley

The LRGVDC conducted a Regional Conference entitled "Building PACE in the Valley" on August 19-21, 2015 at the Isla Grand Beach Resort on South Padre Island. The conference helped promote and market the new Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program. Mrs. Terrie Salinas, LRGVDC Economic Development Director stated that it makes sense to tie economic development efforts to conserving energy and saving businesses money, so they can "build-up" their business.

The benefits of PACE are multi-faceted, leading to a win-win-win scenario for virtually all stakeholders. Improvements financed with PACE Loans will enable commercial and industrial properties to achieve greater energy efficiency and help conserve the state's water resources. Among other things, these improvements will:

- Enhance the value and efficiency of existing buildings
- Save substantial amounts in utility costs
- Promote local job creation
- Reduce demand on the energy grid
- Support the state's water plan
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and
- Establish significant business opportunities for engineers, construction contractors, commercial lenders, and investors.

Thanks to the outstanding group of attendees, speakers, vendors and great sponsors, the PACE Conference was an overall success. Mrs. Charlene Heydinger, PACE Executive Director wrote the following words of appreciation: "The PACE in the Valley Conference was a great success, and I could not be more pleased. There was a solid turnout and great enthusiasm, which will lead to local support for PACE programs in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties. The conference went without a hitch, and we are grateful for the opportunity to meet with so many valley leaders about PACE for the Valley. Thanks to all for a great conference!"

For more information on PACE contact Terrie Salinas, LRGVDC Economic Development Department at 956-682-3481



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# LRGVDC Regional Police Academy & Training Center

The current TCOLE training cycle ended on 8/31/2015 for all Texas Peace Officers, Corrections Officers (County Jailers) and Telecommunicators (Dispatchers). All peace officers must have completed at least 40 hours of professional development, including Legislative Updates (3183) and any other specialty courses based on their level of proficiency: Human Trafficking, Missing and Exploited Children, Cultural Diversity, Special Investigative Topics, Crime Scene Investigations, Use of Force, etc.



County Jailers must have completed at least 40 hours by the end of the cycle. For County Jailers, their professional development must include Cultural Diversity and any other courses as the individual and/or the individual's agency assigned.

Telecommunicators must complete at least 20 hours of professional development. However, there are no specific courses that Telecommunicators must take; therefore, they may take any courses as long as the courses meet TCOLE standards. If the Telecommunicator completed the Basic Telecommunication's course (1014) and other courses during this cycle, they should check with TCOLE to ensure they have satisfied their professional development requirements.

For those licensed personnel described above (Peace Officers, Jailers, and Telecommunicators) who do not meet their professional development requirements by the end of the training cycle, TCOLE can take action against the respective license, which could include license suspension or revocation. Once a license goes inactive due to suspension, etc., the licensee and/or the licensee's agency must remit reactivation payment to TCOLE and the licensees must complete any and all courses as mandated by TCOLE for reactivation.



With the beginning of the new training cycle, on 9/1/2015, certain peace officers will have to take courses on Canine Encounters and Working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Additionally, with the new laws, all peace officers will have to take the Legislative Update course (3183) and the LRGVDC Regional Police Academy has the Legislative Update course scheduled for the week of 9/28/2015 through 10/2/2015 at various locations and we are offering morning (8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) and afternoon (1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) sessions.

Please visit our webpage at <http://www.lrgvdc.org/academy.html> for more information on the Legislative Update and other courses offered by the LRGVDC RPA.

## 2015 Healthy Living Fair

The RGV Caregiver Committee of the Area Agency on Aging/LRGVDC, in partnership with the City of Los Indios, hosted the "2015 Healthy Living Fair" on September 3, 2015. This event featured local community organizations providing information on community resources as well as free health screenings.



*Pictured above are attendees as they visit vendors and receive information on community resources.*

The poster for the 2015 Healthy Living Fair includes logos for RGV Caregiver Committee, Tu Salud ¡ Si Cuenta! (Your health counts!), and the City of Los Indios. The event is scheduled for September 3, 2015, from 9am to 11am at the Diamantina Ortega-Bennett Community Center, 309 E. Haywood, Los Indios, TX. Activities include Diabetes Education, Healthy Aging, Free Healthy Bingo, and Free Health Screenings. Contact information for Denise Guzman (956-399-4255) and Noemi Rodriguez (956) 682-3481 is provided. Logos for various community partners like AARP, Caring, 5030, SMP, and VA are at the bottom.



## Ombudsman Program Recruits UT RGV Occupational Therapy Students as Volunteers

The Ombudsman Program recruited 22 students from the University of Texas RGV Occupational Therapy program as Ombudsman volunteers. They have been trained and assigned to local nursing homes. As Certified Volunteer Ombudsmen, they advocate for quality of life and care for people living in nursing homes. These Certified Volunteer Ombudsmen make monthly visits to the local facilities, meet with residents and their families about any concerns/issues they may have and work to solve them.



## EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH CERT

Congratulations to members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Edinburg Volunteer Fire Department and the La Villa Volunteer Fire Department for completing the 20-hour CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program in June 2015. This group of ladies demonstrate a personal responsibility to be prepared – in doing so, they are contributing to the safety and security of their communities. We commend them for their contributions!



*Standing, L to R:* Angie Haun, Edna Snider, Mary Alonzo, Mari Tovar, Alice Salinas, Elizabeth Mercado, Juanita Saenz (CERT Instructor, LRGVDC), Cristina Vasquez,  
*Sitting, L to R:* Isela Salazar, Dalinda Garcia, Mary Garcia



## Community Resource Mixer



*Pictured above are attendees participating in Ice Breaker*



The RGV Caregiver Committee of the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging hosted a Community Resource Mixer for professionals on August 5, 2015 at Caregiver SOS in McAllen. The Community Resource Mixer brought together Administrators, Social Workers, Directors, Owners and Community Liaisons for a great evening of networking. Attendees were introduced to the RGV Caregiver Committee members and heard the overall mission of the committee. By coming together we can increase awareness and better address the needs of caregivers in the Rio Grande Valley.

## Area Agency on Aging Staff Attend Congressional Summit

The LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging staff attended the "Congressional Summit" hosted by U.S. Congressman Filemon Vela on August 22, 2015.

This event allowed constituents to meet with representatives from various organizations and agencies that offer an array of services. The event was divided into five areas: Employment, Health, Resource, Education and Financial.

*"Ensuring constituents receive the needed services from federal governmental agencies is a top priority of mine. This Congressional Summit allows various organizations, including those serving veterans, to come together and help South Texans."* – Filemon Vela, Member of Congress



*Pictured above are constituents attending the Congressional Summit*

# Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Train the Trainer Course

A fire chief and five firefighters from the Mission Fire Department partnered with the LRGVDC CERT Program recently to earn their CERT Instructor certification for completing the CERT Train the Trainer course. Training CERT instructors was one of the Fire Department's goals and completing this course accomplished that goal.

The purpose of the instructor course is to produce competent instructors for the CERT Basic Training course. Potential instructors must deliver the CERT Basic Training course accurately, conveying the messages and intent of the CERT Program (e.g. safety, teamwork, consideration with overall community emergency operations plan), to ensure that students achieve the objective of the course and deliver training effectively, thus enabling participants to learn and correctly apply skill sets and create a comfortable and managed learning environment.



*(From Left: Manuel Cruz, Director of Homeland Security and Master CERT Instructor; Rene Lopez, Jr., Fire Chief; Douglas Williams, Deputy Chief; Eric Eli Olivarez, Firefighter; Alberto R. Juarez, Firefighter; Eric Lee Lopez, Firefighter; Richard A. Cruz, Lieutenant)*

Rene Lopez Jr., Fire Chief, explained that one of the goals of the Mission Fire Department is Community Preparedness and volunteer opportunities in the community. It was out of these interests that he saw CERT as a regional way to help develop volunteerism among the citizens of Mission, school faculty, staff and students, and neighboring jurisdictions.

The plan is to have a core group of skilled and well trained firefighters go through the CERT Train the Trainer course and then identify underserved communities and the Independent School District (ISD) to help develop a CERT presence, sustainability, and to further expand that CERT program especially in the ISDs so that the community and the students can give back.

The LRGVDC is grateful to Chief Lopez and the City of Mission Fire Department for taking a pro-active approach in community preparedness and for their efforts in helping our agency expand the CERT program and continuing to spread the program motto, "Ability to do the greatest good for the greatest number in the shortest amount of time." For information on CERT Basic Training and course training availability, Chief Lopez may be contacted at the Mission Fire Department located at 415 W. Tom Landry, Mission, Texas (956) 580-8705.



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