

Regional Pursuits

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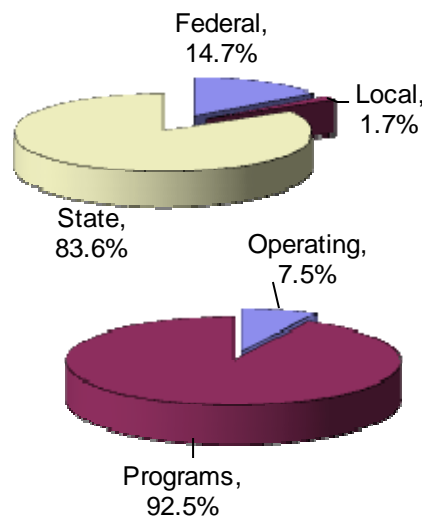
Membership Approves 2016 Work Program and Budget

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Membership has approved the 2016 Work Program and Budget that will allow the Council to continue its active role in the Region. The new FY 2016 budget puts emphasis on, and addresses needs within Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties in programs such as Transit, Criminal Justice Assistance, Homeland Security, Law Enforcement Training, 9-1-1 Coordination, Solid Waste, Water Quality/Quantity Planning, Economic Development, the Area Agency on Aging, and Disaster Recovery Funding as a result of Hurricane Dolly.

“The budget reflects a sound organization and continued regional support of comprehensive services provided,” stated LRGVDC President, Mayor Jim Darling. Local revenues are used successfully to leverage state and federal funds. Only approximately 0.6% of the LRGVDC budget is generated from membership dues.

State income sources included the Texas General Land Office, Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Criminal Justice Division of the Governor’s Office, Texas Department of Transportation, TDPS/State Homeland Security, and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. Federal sources for funds include the Economic Development Administration, the Corporation for National Service and the Federal Transit administration.

The LRGVDC employs 159 individuals and will operate on a projected annual budget of \$39.9 million in 2016.



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LRGVDC recently announced a new twitter account to keep the area community more informed about organization updates, announcements, and information.



Texas General Land Office (GLO) Recognizes LRGVDC Disaster Recovery Program Accomplishments



At the March 23rd LRGVDC Board meeting Pete Phillips, Deputy Director of Disaster Recovery and Doralicia Rivera, Residential Activities Manager (pictured left) for the Texas General Land Office (GLO) Disaster Recovery Program, on behalf of GLO Commissioner George P. Bush presented Board President Mayor Jim Darling with a recognition plaque for LRGVDC’s Disaster Recovery Program accomplishments. Ms. Rivera announced that the LRGVDC is the first Council of Governments (COG) in the Hurricanes Dolly and Ike Disaster Recovery effort to be on the forefront of closing their program. As a result of efforts by LRGVDC staff, the Housing Advisory Committee (some of whom are pictured below) and AECOM consultants, 777 houses were provided for disaster recovery in the Lower

Rio Grande Valley. On behalf of the LRGVDC Board of Directors Mayor Darling accepted the plaque and wryly added that “hopefully this will never happen to us again”, meaning a disaster from which the region would need to recover. Ms. Rivera also acknowledged “the soldiers” behind this effort and asked Marcie Oviedo, Program Director; Ludy Saenz, Assistant Program Director; Valerie Ramos, Program Administrator; Gaby Garza, Priscilla Delgado, Nancy Rincones, Monica Cantu, and Yolanda Cuellar to stand and be recognized.



Pictured above are some of the Housing Advisory Committee Members: Luis Figueroa, Joanne Longoria, Diana Serna, Doralicia Rivera (GLO), Eddy Gonzalez, Steve Brewer, Gilbert Ortiz

LRGVDC – REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

At the February 25th LRGVDC Board of Directors meeting Mr. Ron Garza, Deputy Executive Director announced the upcoming planning schedule and process for updating the five year Regional Strategic Plan (2015 – 2020).

The LRGVDC, the official Council of Governments for Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties, is required to update and/or revise its Regional Strategic Plan before every regular legislative session begins. This is done in order to guide the unified, far reaching development of our region, eliminate duplication, and promote economy and efficiency in a coordinated development of long range planning for the three county LRGVDC region. The Regional Strategic Plan has become a supporting mechanism and resource in recent years especially to local governments in justifying the regional impact of funding and projects for expending vital community services.

Members of the general public and all agency partners and stakeholders, who reside within the LRGVDC region and economic development district, are invited and encouraged to participate in this regional planning process. The purpose of having participation in the development of the Regional Strategic Plan is to ensure that the regional priorities that the state and federal governments review

meet a comprehensive array of needs; especially in terms of improving the quality of life for veterans, colonias, the elderly, and others, plus many additional aspects of promoting job opportunities through economic development. This process is ongoing and will continue to take place over the next several months with coordination efforts by each appropriate Program Director and input from various subcommittees. A public forum is scheduled for Thursday, May 19th from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Valley Metro Transportation Center located at 510 S. Pleasantview Dr. in Weslaco, TX.

On Wednesday, July 27th the LRGVDC will host a Regional Strategic Plan Overview Presentation and an Open House that will include a Program Information Fair from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. To conclude this process the Regional Strategic Plan is scheduled to be presented to the LRGVDC Board of Directors for final review and approval at their regularly scheduled meeting on August 24th.

In order to continue to showcase the Valley's success in moving forward and planning for the future as a region your participation is highly encouraged and greatly appreciated. The most current Regional Strategic Plan is available for review on the LRGVDC website: www.lrgvdc.org.

Ms. South Texas Senior America Pageant 2016

LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging staff member Elida Carranza-Vargas participated in the 4th Annual Ms. South Texas Senior America Pageant “Empowering the Senior Woman” on February 28, 2016 at the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium. For the talent portion of the competition Elida sang a Christian song by Nena Leal, entitled “Mi Jornada” (My Journey) for which she received a standing ovation! Elida stated, “My purpose for participating was not to receive a crown, but to promote my church, One Way Road to Heaven in Donna, and my Employer of 24 years, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, Area Agency on Aging. What an opportunity to represent my faith, my employer and a wonderful time in life as an Empowered Senior Woman! I feel confident I accomplished what I set out to do.” Way to go Elida!!



LRGVDC STAFF RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE



Pictured in front L-R: Sergio Castro, 10 years; Maria Rojas, 10 years; LRGVDC Board President Mayor Jim Darling who presented the awards, Jose L. Gonzalez, 35 years; Molly Segovia, 10 years; Stephen Tice, 10 years. Back row L-R: Linda De La Fuente, 10 years; Celeste Nepomuceno, 5 years; Aleida Tirado, 5 years; Albina Castro, 5 years; Maricela Oviedo, 30 years; Crystal Balboa, 20 years; Magdalena Garza, 20 years; and LRGVDC's Executive Director Ken Jones. Not pictured: Thomas F. Logan, 5 years. Congratulations staff and thank you for your years of dedicated service.

Solid Waste Grant Applications Reviewed at Advisory Committee Meeting

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) met Tuesday, January 5th to review and rank Solid Waste Applications submitted for the FY 2016/2017 bi-annual. Representation for SWAC membership includes members from the tri-county region (Cameron, Hidalgo & Willacy) and is composed of 8% county representatives, 12% large city representatives, 16% medium city representatives, 12% small city representatives, 16% private sector group, 12% educational group, 12% environmental group and 12% private citizen group.

A total of fourteen (14) applications were submitted and once approved by LRGVDC Board of Directors and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) eleven (11) of the 14 projects will receive funding.



Applicants	Requested Amount	Funded Amount
City of Los Indios – Source Reduction & Recycling	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
City of Alton – Source Reduction & Recycling – Recycling Technician	\$29,955.20	\$29,955.20
City of Pharr – Source Reduction & Recycling – Recycling Trailers	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
City of Alamo – Source Reduction & Recycling	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
City of Pharr – Source Reduction & Recycling - Curbside Program	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
City of San Juan – Source Reduction & Recycling - Salaries	\$20,287.28	\$20,287.28
City of South Padre Island – Source Reduction & Recycling	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
City of San Juan – Source Reduction & Recycling - Salaries	\$29,003.28	\$29,003.28
City of Donna - Source Reduction & Recycling	\$20,000.00	\$15,991.00



With the start of the new training cycle on 9/1/2015, the Regional Police Academy (RPA) offers various courses to help TCOLE licensees complete their legislatively mandated professional development hours. Since January 2016 the RPA has offered the Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (LEEDA) Supervisory Leadership Institute Course, Human Trafficking, the 84th Legislative Updates, Identity Crimes, Sex Offender Registration training, and Missing and Exploited Children. In February, the RPA offered the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT) Program for Domestic and International Terrorism Awareness, the Basic Instructor's Course, Excited Delirium, Human Trafficking, and the 84th Legislative Update Course.

Additionally, since the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) has mandated new courses for peace officers who wish to receive their Intermediate or Advance Proficiency certificates, the RPA is offering the following courses: Child Safety Alert Check List, Traumatic and Acquired Brain Injury, and Canine Encounters. Each of these are new courses mandated by the 84th Texas Legislature for Texas peace officers. Even though the mandate to complete these courses are for those wishing to obtain their Intermediate or Advance Proficiency certificates, the RPA highly recommends that all peace officers complete the courses.

The new two-year training cycle for TCOLE licensees (peace officers, county jailers, and telecommunications) began on 9/1/2015. All licensees must complete legislatively mandated courses no later than 8/31/2017. Failure to meet the legislatively mandated continuing hours could result in suspension of the license, a re-activation fee, and/or a written reprimand. Peace officers and county jailers must complete at least 40 hours of professional development. Depending on one's proficiency level, the licensee must complete certain courses such as Cultural Diversity, Identity Crimes, Crime Scene Search, Suicide Detection and Prevention in Jails, etc. Telecommunicators must complete at least 20 hours of professional development and there are no mandates on which courses Telecommunicators must complete beyond the basic licensing courses.



The RPA is offering courses to satisfy the professional education of all licensees. The RPA provides suggestions for licensees on the RPA's webpage: <http://www.lrgvdc.org/academy.html>, and the RPA posts upcoming training opportunities on its webpage, on Twitter (www.twitter.com/lrgvdc_academy) and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/lrgvdc.police/>). Persons can register for courses by emailing the RPA at iduran@lrgvdc.org or calling (956) 364-4507.

Lastly, due to recent media attention, the RPA encourages all peace officers to complete courses on verbal de-escalation techniques. Unfortunately, when persons are injured or killed by Law Enforcement Officers, the media coverage may accentuate those incidents, which may cause distrust of law enforcement by community members. Such distrust can jeopardize the safety of officers and community members. Please refer to the Officer Down Memorial Page (<https://www.odmp.org/search/year/2015>) to see a list of those (133) officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in 2015. Thus far in 2016, 12 officers have made the ultimate sacrifice (see <https://www.odmp.org/search/year>). As a result, the RPA suggests the completion of the following courses for all peace officers: Verbal Judo, Verbal De-Escalation Techniques, Mental Health Officer, Excited Delirium, courses on synthetic drugs and their effects, and any other communications skills courses offered by reputable sources. The RPA recognizes and acknowledges that Law Enforcement Officers may have need to use physical force to control resistive subjects; however, many situations can be diffused if officers attempt verbal de-escalation techniques where appropriate and applicable.



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

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Ron Garza	Deputy Executive Director	Tom Logan	Director, Valley Metro
Crystal Balboa	Director, Finance	Manuel Cruz	Director, Homeland Security
Anna Hernandez	Director, Human Resources	Marcie Oviedo	Director, Regional Planning & Services
Victor Morales	Director, Procurement	Sergio Castro	Director, 9-1-1 Services
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