

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 Gonzalez Director, Area Agency on Aging	Manuel Flores Director, Transit Services
Andrew Canon Director, Hidalgo County MPO	Manuel Cruz Director, Homeland Security
Juan Gomez Director, 9-1-1 Services	Victor Morales Procurement Officer
Paul Williams Director, Regional Police Academy & Training Center	

Mission Statement

“ENCOURAGE AND PERMIT LOCAL UNITS OF 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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REGIONAL PURSUITS

LRGVDC's Regional Police Academy and Training Center Course Calendar

To meet the continuing needs of public safety, the Regional Police Academy and Training Center will offer the following courses for the remainder of the fiscal year:

Basic Instructors Course	January 12 – 16
TCIC/NCIC (less than full access)	January 20
TCIC/NCIC (full access)	January 20 – 21
Cultural Diversity/January	26, March 30 & May 25
Special Investigative Topics	February 23, April 27 & June 29
Suicide Detection and Prevention in Jails	February 25
Crisis Intervention Training	Mar 2-3, April 6-7, July 6-7, & Aug 3-4
Crime Scene Search	March 17 – 20
Jail Inmate Rights and Privileges	March 25 – 27
HIV-AIDS and Viral Hepatitis in Criminal Justice	April 15
Interpersonal Communications in the Corrections Setting	April 28 - 30
Civil Process	May 11 – 15
Use of Force in a Jail Setting	May 27
School Resource Officer Certification	June 8 – 12
ASP Tactical Baton	July 2
New Supervisors Course	July 13 - 15
Crisis Communications	August 17 – 19

Additionally, we are working on Telecommunications Certification, Human Trafficking, Police Firearms Instructor Course, and several courses for telecommunications operators; however, the dates have not been set for these courses. For inquiries for law enforcement training please contact Mr. Paul Williams, Academy Director at 956-364-4507.

Foster Grandparent Outreach and Recognition of Partners

On November 24, 2008 Foster Grandparent Program Staff participated in the Hidalgo County Head Start Program Parent Fair. The Hidalgo County Head Start hosts a Parent Fair annually to give the parents of the students enrolled in the program an opportunity to get to know the Community Partners. At this fair the Foster Grandparent Staff were able to share information on the program and the benefits to both the Foster Grandparent Volunteers and the children they serve with the parents who visited the booth. As an added bonus they were able to participate in a cakewalk sponsored by the Foster Grandparent Program. There were 171 parents who came by the Foster Grandparent booth.

The Foster Grandparent Program celebrated their Annual Thanksgiving Lunch on November 25th at the Stephen F. Austin Education Complex in Weslaco. Foster Grandparent Volunteers, LRGVDC-AAA Staff and Special Guests enjoyed turkey with all the trimmings. Special Guests included representatives from the City of Weslaco Parks and Recreation, Apex Primary Care, Texas Health Springs, Foy's Supermarket, and the Weslaco I.S.D Parental Involvement. These agencies were given recognition and thanks for the support they have provided to the Foster Grandparent Program this year. The agencies were given certificates and a small token of appreciation for their support.



Happy Holidays

from the
Board of Directors
and
Staff

of the LRGVDC



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Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Train-the-Trainer Course (FEMA Course G417)

As a nation, 9-11 gave us a heightened awareness of our vulnerability to terrorist attacks. Most recently, and to an extent, incidents have also made us more cognizant of the impact NATURAL DISASTERS can have on our communities. In response to the growing concerns, the federal government has implemented a grassroots approach to responding to local disasters through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. Basically, the CERT program draws on the skills of local, trained volunteers to help their fellow citizens by preparing for and responding to local emergencies.

Many communities across the country are now in the process of developing CERTs. However, before a CERT team can be built volunteers first have to be trained. Beginning on March 10-12, 2009, the LRGVDC will be sponsoring a Train-the-Trainer Course in Westlaco. The purpose of this course is to train individuals who would then be responsible for training local CERT volunteers. The course is being offered free of charge. This will be a fairly intensive 2-1/2 day course that will prepare students to then instruct local volunteers in the following areas:

- Disaster Preparedness
- Disaster medical operations
- Team organization and disaster psychology
- Fire Suppression
- Light search and rescue
- Terrorism and CERT

Course review and disaster simulationTarget Audience: This is a course for CERT trainers and program managers – not for individual CERT team members. Training for CERT members is provided in the basic CERT course. Participants in the Train-the-Trainer course should be volunteers who are willing to conduct CERT training for team members, emergency responders who will be teaching specialized portions of the basic CERT Course, or individuals who have volunteered or professionals who have been selected to manage a CERT or coordinate CERT activities.

Prerequisites: Participants should have a working knowledge of the CERT program. Previous experience providing and facilitating instruction for adults is desirable. As the basic CERT course deals with disaster preparedness, fire suppression, disaster medical aid, and light search and rescue, volunteer instructors with emergency management, firefighting, EMS, search and rescue experience or medical training are particularly desirable.

To ensure that there will be an adequate number of seats available and register for the train the trainer course, please contact Manuel Cruz, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness at 956.682.3481 ext. 105.

LRGVDC Participates in the First Mexico NENA Chapter Conference

Texas-NENA (National Emergency Number Association) and NENA members were pleased to participate in the first ever Mexico NENA Chapter conference November 4-7, 2008. Attendees included NENA president Ron Bonneau, and southeast region director Toni Dunne who were joined by Paul McClaren of Position and Texas-NENA members, Kelli Merriweather (Commission on State Emergency Communications), Sergio Castro (Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council), Sonya Lopez Clauson (Greater Harrison County 9-1-1), and Gordon Lopez (Kimball Associates).

The conference was truly a success with over 500 attendees, and nearly 30 vendors. Sessions covered the full gamut of emergency communications aspects including operations, training, administrative and technical issues. NENA members were pleased to speak of our experiences and offered resources and advice. This conference was first-class to say the least—and it can be compared to any of the NENA state chapters which have been producing conferences for many years. There was superb coordination, education and networking opportunities as well as a display of wonderful hospitality by the Mexico Chapter members.



Sergio Castro giving a presentation on Principles of Operation

Because of the success of this event a commitment has been made to host another conference in July of 2009. Other NENA members are welcome to attend and share their experiences.



Conference Organizers: In front row, from left to right: Paul McClaren, NENA Technical Committee Chair; Manuel Villarreal, Mexico NENA Chapter President; Toni Dunne, NENA Southeast National Representative; Sergio Castro, LRGVDC 9-1-1 Assistant Director

Seniors Receive Thanksgiving Baskets

The First United Methodist Church of McAllen and the Area Agency on Aging staff delivered Thanksgiving Baskets to eighty three (83) low-income senior citizens. These seniors are currently AAOA Case Management clients from McAllen and the surrounding communities. The baskets contained a cooked smoked turkey and all the trimmings, canned goods, fresh vegetables, fruits and other non-perishable dry food items.

The agency has received various calls from the clients to express their gratitude for the kindness and generosity shown to them, since some did not have the means to purchase or bake a turkey. The distribution took place on November 23-24, 2008, marking 12 years of working with faith based ministries. Mutual effort and teamwork has again made this year’s event successful.

“THE BELLS ARE RINGING”

On December 6, the doors were opened and the bells were ringing as business began at “El Mercado”. Not the newly donated bells from our friends from Tamaulipas, Mexico but the cash register bells. This is a good sign that even in this sluggish economy, Mercado Delta will help increase sale revenues for the City of Edcouch and the rest of the Delta Region.

This day marked the first business day for the Delta area and overall the weekend was very successful. Although, there was no formal ceremony, Congressman Ruben Hinojosa was there to welcome folks to the Valley’s regional marketplace. Mercado Delta had 40 to 50 vendors and live music

was played all weekend long. Shoppers included our Valley locals and during this time of the year, “Winter Texans” were on hand to join the festivities.

Mercado Delta was funded by an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant that was awarded to the Delta Region Revitalization Corporation (DRRC) to construct an outdoor market and tourist attraction. The Mercado includes a Farmers’ Market and several anchor businesses including two permanent restaurants that will open in early 2009. The DRRC received \$500,000 for Phase I and \$2,617,029 for Phase II from EDA. The first phase was for land purchase, project design, and engineering. This phase of the grant was administered by the LRGVDC’s Economic Development Department. The second phase was for administrative services and for completing the project’s engineering and building construction. This grant was administered by full-time DRRC employees.

Mercado Delta will feature special events and will occasionally highlight products and goods from specific cities and regions in the US and Mexico. Stay tuned for monthly events and the official grand opening in February, 2009.

Area Agency on Aging Sponsors Annual Caregiver Expo

In an effort to continue enhancing the quality of life and care of the aging population in our community, the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging Caregiver’s Committee hosted the First Annual RGV Caregiver Expo. The event took place Saturday November 8, 2008 at the South Texas College-Nursing & Allied Health Building located at 1101 E. Vermont Ave. in McAllen. The First Annual Caregiver Expo was designed for the family caregiver and was a collaborative effort of several community agencies. It provided screening for glucose, blood pressure, vision, and cholesterol. The highlight for this event included a food demonstration promoting healthy eating, easy preparation, and affordable ingredients. In addition, educational brochures, literature on health topics and services in our community were available.

The LRGVDC AAA Caregivers Committee’s mission is to address the issues and concerns that family caregivers face, to better understand their needs, to educate by identifying and providing local services, and helping to alleviate stress/burnout to promote a better quality of life.

For more information contact the Area Agency on Aging at 956-682-3481 and ask for the Caregiver Program.



LRGVDC AAA Caregiver Committee members include from row, left to right: Mari Hernandez, Family Caregiver Program; Gasiano Salinas, Adult Protective Services; Adriana Morales, STC; Letty O. Sanchez, Caregivers Link; and Luis Leal, H.E.B. Back row, left to right: Sandra Villegas Food Bank RGV; Jenny Guzman, VALL; Noemi Rodriguez, LRGVDC AAA; and Esmeralda Delgado, Wesley Nurse. Not pictured: Jose L. Gonzalez, LRGVDC AAA Director; Debra Lachico, LRGVDC AAA Elder Rights Program Administrator; Jenny Gonzalez, DADS; Nina Enriquez, CMA Hospice; and Morris Campirano, American Heart Association.

Annual Medicare Part-D Outreach Efforts

Medicare Part D enrollment is in full swing. Benefit Counselors in McAllen and Harlingen are busy enrolling seniors into the best plan tailored for their personal needs. They have been giving presentations to the community, enrolling dialysis patients at dialysis centers and are currently planning to

attend a CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) event at Las Palmas in McAllen. They will join CMS in enrolling seniors into Medicare Part D and the Low Income Subsidy.

Four temporary staff members were recently hired under a special grant from the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services to do outreach for the Low Income Subsidy or what is known as “extra help”. They were assigned specific zip codes where CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) identified approximately 5,000 seniors in the Valley were potentially eligible for this assistance but were not taking advantage of it. News articles were submitted, television and radio promotions (English and Spanish) were done, flyers and posters were posted in pharmacies, doctor’s offices, hospital social worker offices, libraries, post offices, senior centers and at health fairs. It is our goal that seniors who qualify will take advantage of this help and that it will help ease some of the burden of their medical expenses.

“DANGER, WOMEN WORKING”

Women are finally being recognized as successful Business Owners. In 1997, “women owned more than 5.4 million non-farm businesses, generating \$818.7 billion in business revenues and employing in total nearly 7.1 million people (National Women’s Business Council Article).

This trend is also evident as shown in the increasing number of women clients that have walked in our doors stated Mrs. Terrie Salinas, Program Director for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Certified Development Company and Economic Development District. Earlier this year, Mrs. Salinas contacted the Center for Economic Development Opportunities Director, Arturo Ramirez and began discussing the need to create a women’s business group that would specifically address the need of women business owners. Their purpose would be to inform, educate, and train women on how to become strong, successful business owners. This group will also provide the financial and moral support needed to overcome challenges that most male business owners do not have to overcome.

After several months of planning, a new organization entitled the “Tri-County Women’s Business Group” was formed. In November, the group was officially recognized by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Corporation. At last month’s Board of Directors Meeting the Tri County Women’s Business Group submitted a resolution to use the Corporation’s non-profit status to apply for grant funds. Both the Development Council and Corporation’s Board of Directors were very welcoming and supportive of this group’s efforts to become self-sufficient and provide an invaluable service to the Valley’s population of women business owners.

The picture below shows the first members of the planning group that helped establish the Tri-County Women’s Business Group. They are (left to right): Letty Flores, Economic Development Department of the Governor’s Office; Terrie G. Salinas, LRGVDC Program Director; Rocío Lopez, Women’s Group Member; Norma G. Garcia, Hidalgo County Treasurer; Aurora Hinojosa, People Signs; Anna De Leon, LRGVDC Planner; Thelma Garza, SBA Program Specialist; Cristina Guzman, Proactive Health Care; and Blanca Villapando, Senator Lucio’s Staff. Seated in the front row are the Group’s Officers: Corina Salazar, Vice-Chair; Mari Garza, Chair; and Mary Garza, Secretary.

