

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
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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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REGIONAL PURSUITS

LRGVDC Receives 5 NADO Innovation Awards

The LRGVDC recently received five (5) 2006 Innovation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). Awards were received for LRGVDC's regional efforts on the following programs: Amber Alert; Communications Interoperability; Homeland Security Program; Promoting Senior Independence; and the Hidalgo County MPO's Land Use Comprehensive Plan. NADO recognizes regional organizations for demonstrating innovative approaches to economic and community development. NADO awarded 74 awards this year for a variety of projects such as aging, entrepreneurialism, emergency management, environment, healthcare, literacy, workforce, technology, tourism, and transportation planning. Awardees are showcased during NADO's Annual Conferences.

According to Ken Jones, LRGVDC Executive Director and NADO's Immediate Past President, "A common thread among these awards is the idea that a well planned project is the cornerstone to successful regional development and integral to sustaining and preserving a community's environment, economy and heritage." For more information on NADO please contact Ken Jones at the LRGVDC or visit the NADO website at www.nado.org.



Sandra Boyd, LRGVDC Director of Homeland Security is presented NADO 2006 Innovation Award by Ken Jones, NADO President. Award was given for the Amber Alert, Communications Interoperability, and Homeland Security Programs.



Jose Gonzalez, LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging Director (left) is presented NADO 2006 Innovation Award by NADO President Ken Jones.



Andrew Canon, Hidalgo Co. MPO Director (left) receives NADO Innovation Award from NADO President Ken Jones.

Regional Police Academy Graduates the 113th and 114th Basic Peace Officer Academies in a Joint Graduation Ceremony

Cadets from the 113th Basic Peace Officer Academy - evening program and the 114th Basic Peace Officer Academy - day program held a joint graduation ceremony at the Marble Arch in Weslaco on September 7th. The Honorable Armando Martinez, State Representative, 39th District was the guest speaker for the ceremony attended by more than 500 family and friends of the 42 cadets. Several the graduates are employed by area agencies including Edinburg and Harlingen Police Departments as well as Willacy County Constable Pct. 1.

The John Swan Memorial Awards were presented to Annabel Falcon of the 113th Academy and Juan Rios of the 114th Academy. This award is presented to the cadet having the highest academic grade average.

Isidoro Nieto, Principal of Weslaco High School accepted the first LRGVDC Scholarship Award. This award is presented to an area high school to be presented to a graduating senior planning to continue his or her education in the criminal justice field. The award fund was created by the cadet classes by holding fund raisers during the academy program.

MMRS Tri-National Conference

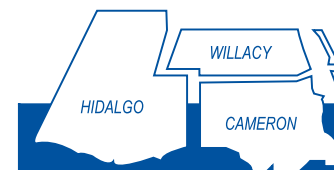
The long awaited Metropolitan Medical Response System - Tri-National Conference on Cross Border Collaboration was held at the Sheraton Beach Resort on South Padre Island August 21st - 24th.

Attendees from Canada, Mexico and the United States heard from a wide range of speakers addressing topics ranging from the National Incident Management, Ethics of Triage, Pandemic Flu, Lessons Learned from Hurricane Rita, Challenges to Cross Border Collaborations, Mexico - U.S., Patient Tracking and Hazard Mitigation.

General Session guest speaker was Dennis Atwood, National Program Manager, Metropolitan Medical Response System, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, D.C.

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Valley Participates in 2006 State-Wide Hurricane Evacuation and Sheltering Exercise

The Lower Rio Grande Valley regions' agencies and jurisdictions recently participated in the 2006 State-Wide Hurricane Evacuation and Sheltering Exercise. The exercise was conducted at the Knapp's Medical Conference Center in Weslaco, Texas on behalf of the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM). The Valley region's participation was part of a state-wide hurricane and sheltering exercise for which the Lower Rio Grande Valley is one of the five state hurricane evacuation areas. Among participation in the exercise included representatives of the region's emergency management coordinators, law enforcement and fire first responders, U. S. Border Patrol, Texas Department of Public Safety, area health department officials, independent school districts officials, public works and LRGVDC personnel. The purpose of the State's Hurricane Evacuation and Sheltering Exercise was to improve the ability of the State to respond to hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. The exercise focused on the orderly and safe evacuation/sheltering and the problems areas identified during Katrina and Rita and incorporated the lessons learned from past hurricanes. The exercise was designed and developed by The National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center (NERRTC) on behalf of GDEM. NERRTC representatives' role was as facilitators for the exercise at the Knapp Medical Conference Center.

The exercise principally focused on the tasks that were identified during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita which included the areas for Command, Control and Communications, the identification and evacuation of persons with special needs, fuel availability, traffic management and contra flow, sheltering and public awareness.

The exercise scenario was a fictional hurricane named Eunice that made its landfall May 05, 2006 as a very strong category 5 storm. The strength and track of Hurricane Eunice drove evacuation from surge zones along the entire coast of Texas. The functional exercise began at H-72 hours with H-Hour representing the time when tropical force winds reached the coast and ended as tropical force winds begin striking the coast.

Contra-flow Operations - During the exercise at the Knapp Medical Conference Center, Texas DPS and TXDOT discussed under what conditions Contra-flow would be determined as necessary on all highways leading from the LRGV. TXDOT and DPS discussed issues and actions necessary to load equipment and make all necessary preparations to establish roadblocks, establish security and place signage for informing our local population. During this exercise regional coordination between local jurisdictions, Texas DPS and TXDOT was exercised to ensure a smooth implementation of Contra-flow.

Test Alternate Communications - In preparation for the anticipated loss of telephone communications during a hurricane, local and regional evacuating and sheltering jurisdictions established and exercised interoperable communications plans within the LRGV and with the Disaster District Committee (DDC) and the State Operations Center (SOC).

Sheltering Plans - During the exercise, participants of the LRGV emergency management coordinators' and the counties Health Departments exercised and discussed the issues for sheltering the general population and identifying, sheltering and evacuating the Medical Special Needs (MSN) population of the region.

State of Texas To Receive Another Round of Homeland Security Funding

On May 31, 2006 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced the final award allocations for all programs included in the FY2006 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP): State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), Urban Areas Secretary initiative (UASI), Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), and the Citizen Corps Program (CCP). The FY2006 HSGP will provide approximately \$89,850,352 to State of Texas, local governments, and Urban Areas to enhance their capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.

In fiscal year 2006, DHS adopted a risk and effectiveness-based approach to allocating funding for certain programs within HSGP. This approach aligns federal resources with national priorities and targets capabilities established by The Interim National Preparedness Goal to generate the highest return on investment in increasing the nation's level of preparedness.

HSGP funds can be used for planning, organization, equipment, training, exercises, management, and administration costs. The 2006 funds are in addition to the approximately \$10 billion already delivered nationally by the department's Office of Grants and Training since September 11, 2001.

HSGP includes five separate grant programs that were distributed throughout the United States: SHSP \$544.5 million; LETPP, \$396 million; UASI, \$757.3 million; MMRS, \$29.7 million; and CCP, \$19.8 million.

Grants and Training, a component of the DHS Preparedness Directorate, partners with federal, state, local, and private sector officials to strengthen the capabilities of state, local, tribal, and regional authorities to prepare for, prevent, and respond to terrorist acts and other catastrophic incidents.

The final FY 2006 HSGP allocations were determined based on the following methodologies:

Program	Allocation Methodology
SHSP	Base allocation according to USA PATRIOT Act formula, with the remainder allocated based on analysis of relative risk and anticipated effectiveness of proposed solutions
LETPP	Base allocation according to USA PATRIOT Act formula, with the remainder allocated based on analysis of relative risk and anticipated effectiveness of proposed solutions
UASI	All funding allocated based on analysis of relative risk and anticipated effectiveness of proposed solutions
MMRS	Funding distributed equally among 124 MMRS jurisdictions (allocation amounts announced on February 3, 2006 via Information Bulletin 201)
CCP	Base allocation according to USA PATRIOT Act formula, with the remainder allocated based on population (allocation amounts announced on February 3, 2006 via Information Bulletin 201)

TEXAS ALLOCATION

SHSP	\$ 26,140,000
LETPP	\$ 24,740,000
UASI	\$ 34,960,000
MMRS	\$ 3,020,290
CCP	\$ 1,020,062

For more information on Regional Homeland Security activities contact Manuel Cruz, Program Administrator - LRGVDC

Low Income Subsidy Outreach Efforts



The Area Agency on Aging has begun its efforts to outreach low-income seniors that have taken advantage of the Low Income Subsidy available through the Social Security Administration to pay for premiums, deductibles, and co-pays. This program will assist Medicare Beneficiaries who are enrolling in the Medicare Part D's Prescription Plan. The level of assistance will depend on the income levels of the individuals. Based on statistics from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region still has a significant number of eligible individuals not taking advantage of the Low-Income Subsidy Program.

Staff have participated in events in San Carlos and Raymondville to distribute information on the low-income subsidy program and answered questions on how to apply for assistance. Any organization interested in sponsoring an event such as health fair, informational fair, or other event and would like LRGVDC's participation, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 956-682-3481.

City of Combes Information and Services Symposium

The Area Agency on Aging and the City of Combes sponsored an Information and Services Symposium on August 30th at the Combes Event Center. More than a dozen local and state agencies were present to provide information regarding their services. The event was open for all residents and special attention was given to seniors. This was the first time such an event was coordinated in this small community in Cameron County. Any community interested in providing this type of service to their residents, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 956-682-3481.

National Health Aging Event



The LRGVDC's Area Agency on Aging and Foster Grandparent Program sponsored its Second Annual Healthy Aging Event on September 6th in Pharr. Over 20 exhibitors and over 300 participants attended the event that promoted healthy aging. Services such as free health screening, safety information, information on available resources such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security were provided. Some exhibitors provided tips on proper healthy habits as a key topic of information available to participants.

Second Annual South Texas Caregiver Conference

The Second Annual South Texas Caregiver Conference is being held October 28th through October 30th at the Sheraton Fiesta Beach Resort on South Padre Island. The Conference theme this year is "The Many Faces of Caregiving". Nationally known author Hanock McCarty of the "Chicken Soup for the Grandparent's Soul" and "A 4th Course of Chicken Soup for the Soul" will open the conference. Bob Blancato, Executive Director of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging and Member of the Policy Committee and Executive Committee of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging will be the Keynote Speaker at the Conference. Rosa Guerrero, a former educator from El Paso will be the

closing Speaker. Additionally, the conference has scheduled 24 sessions on different topics on best practices and tips on how to address issues facing caregivers. For more information regarding the conference, contact the Area Agency on Aging office at 956-682-3481.

Medicare Part D Kick-Off Event

The Area Agency on Aging in coordination with Sunrise Mall in Brownsville is sponsoring a Medicare Part D Kick-Off Event. The new enrollment period for the Medicare Part D Prescription Program is November 15th through December 31st. Medicare beneficiaries will have this period to change plans that best suits them.

The event's program is to provide information on Low Income Subsidy, Medicaid Programs, Identify Theft, Financial Exploitation, Prescription Dosage Consumption, and Medicare Part D. The Kick-Off event is scheduled to take place at The Sunrise Mall, Sears Center Court, Thursday, November 9th, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Josefina Carbonell, Assistant Secretary on Aging for the U.S. Administration on Aging has been invited to be the Keynote Speaker.

FY-2007 Implementation Projects

The LRGVDC Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) met August 10, 2006, to review and rank FY-2007 Solid Waste Implementation Projects. The LRGVDC Board of Directors provided final approval of these projects at the August 24th, 2006, LRGVDC Board of Directors meeting. Projects have been submitted to TCEQ for approval.

Category 1 = Local Enforcement — \$128,200.

Entity	Amount Requested
Cameron County	\$50,000.00
Hidalgo County Pct. 3	\$50,000.00
Mission	\$15,000.00
Combes	\$13,200.00

Category 2 = Source Reduction, Education, Collection Events & Other — \$156,731

Entity	Amount Requested
McAllen — (Equipment)	\$6,645.00
McAllen — (Supplies)	\$10,000.00
Mission	\$18,000.00
Raymondville	\$6,000.00
Cameron County Valley Proud	\$10,000.00
Port Isabel	\$25,000.00
Edinburg	\$23,583.00
Donna	\$24,000.00
Brownsville	\$10,000.00
San Juan	\$23,503.00

Project funds distributed locally for Solid Waste Implementation Projects totaled \$284,931. Solid Waste Implementation project funds are available on a Bi-Annual basis to eligible entities. The funds must be used to implement projects on source reduction & recycling, education & training, local enforcement projects, etc. and address the LRGVDC Regional Solid Waste Management Plan goals. For more information please call the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Planning Department at (956) 682-3481.