

# Rural Conversations

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## The New Texas Rural Health and Economic Development Advisory Council

### *Advisory Council to Improve Quality Of Life and Health Care in Rural Texas—*

**AUSTIN 11/30/2011** — In an effort to enhance the quality of life in rural Texas, Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples announced the formation of a nine-member Texas Rural Health and Economic Development Advisory Council. The council is tasked with identifying rural policy priorities and reviewing the effectiveness of existing rural programs. The council also is responsible for developing a Rural

Policy Plan to be submitted to the Texas Legislature on or before Dec. 1, 2012.

in food production and natural resources. Improving rural communities will benefit the state's overall economy and quality of life." According to state law, Texas Lt. Governor David Dewhurst and House Speaker Joe Straus have appointed State Senator Craig Estes and State Representative Chuck Hopson respectively.

Judge John Thompson; Raymondville Mayor Orlando Correa; Uvalde City Councilman Jay Carnes; Childress City Manager Bryan Tucker; Sul Ross University Director of Nursing Education Program/Instructor Donna Kuenstler; Advocacy and Communications Director Don McBeath of the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals; and Brady Community Development Director Kathi Masonheimer.

The council's Rural Policy Plan will include strategic initiatives for economic and community development; rural health care improvements; and recommendations for the use and allocation of Community Development Block Grant funding, which is used to encourage private investment in rural communities.

The council will create a subcommittee called the Rural Health Task Force, which will look for ways to expand and improve access to health care in rural areas, and offer recommendations for legislation and program development or revision.



**Mason County Courthouse**

"Addressing rural Texas health needs requires strong local leadership and collaboration across multiple stakeholders within rural communities," said Sen. Craig Estes.

"I am honored to be a part of this advisory council and look forward to working with this group to do what is best for rural Texas," said Rep. Chuck Hopson.

In addition to Sen. Estes and Rep. Hopson, the council is comprised of: Polk County

**"Addressing rural  
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"Rural Texas is a strong partner in creating jobs, advancing technology and improving health care services and careers," Commissioner Staples said. "While only 12 percent of our population calls the rural areas home, 100 percent of Texans enjoy the benefits that occur in these areas rich

# Rural Health Care

## *Opportunities for Coordination*

In June 2011 President Barak Obama established the White House Rural Council to address challenges in Rural America. A key objective to help the Council perform its [three core functions](#) is to focus on quality of life,

including increased access to quality health care.

In November 2011, Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples announced the formation of a nine-member Texas Rural Health and Economic Development Advisory Council. The Texas Council's Rural Policy Plan will include strategic initiatives for rural

health care improvements.

It appears through the establishment of these two councils at the federal and state level that there is significant activism for rural health care. With the significant number of issues that rural residents face regarding access to and quality of health care, this action is well needed.

**Fewer rural representatives will not only mean lesser support for rural health care legislation but also more difficulty in overcoming threats to rural health care policy.**

Additionally, rural economic development is closely tied to rural health care improvements. For every physician added to a rural community, approximately \$1.5 million is added in annual total revenue and 23 jobs are created annually. — [Doug McKalip White House senior policy advisor for rural affairs](#)

Recently in October two bills were filed in Congress that are of great interest to Texas rural hospitals and other providers. At the top of the list is Senate Bill 1680 – the Craig Thomas Rural Hospital and Provider Equity Act of 2011 filed by U.S. Senator Kent Conrad of North Dakota. Another bill recently filed is H.R.3212 – the Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) Designation Waiver Authority Act of 2011 by U.S. Representative Mac Thornberry from Texas. For information on these bills see the [Texas Rural Health Association Newsletter](#).

The future of these bills and of rural health care in Texas looks grim, however. S.B.1680 has been assigned to a committee but has not moved. This bill will probably remain on hold for some time,

especially until well after the budget battle, as it is certain to add cost to the Medicare program. Its certainty to pass is up in the air given the fiscal sentiment of Congress. H.R.3212 is also pending in a committee and passage seems unlikely. Because it adds cost to the CAH program, the bill is in direct conflict to a growing sentiment in Congress to limit the growth of the CAH program, as well as eliminate the CAH designation of hospitals that are within 10 to 15 miles of another hospital.

To exacerbate this situation, Texas' political redistricting will intensify the struggle to improve rural health care quality and access in the state. Fewer rural representatives will not only mean lesser support for rural health care legislation but also more difficulty in overcoming threats to rural health care policy.

While individual engagement in the process of educating our elected officials can be very powerful, there are numerous agencies, organizations and programs currently engaged and tuned into rural health care policy conversations. These

include: the [State Office of Rural Health \(SORH\)](#), [Texas Organization of Rural Community Hospitals \(TORCH\)](#), [Texas Rural Health Association \(TRHA\)](#), [Texas Association of Rural Health Clinics \(TARHC\)](#), [Area Health Education Centers \(AHECs\)](#), universities including [Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health](#) and [Texas Tech University F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health](#), the [National Rural Health Association \(NRHA\)](#), and the [Federal Office of Rural Health Policy](#).

These entities should be, if not already, engaged and collaborating with each other, with other health entities, with the public, and with policy makers to ensure rural health care issues are being made apparent and emphasizing the current seriousness and future consequences of not addressing rural health care policy. Collaboration on this scale is an impressive force that in coordination with the newly established councils has the potential to have positive impacts for rural health care in Texas.

# Rural Communities - Jacksboro, Texas

## Communication & Cooperation Joyce Howze—Grant Roundup

Jacksboro, Texas is setting the pace for rural development, as local leaders and stakeholders are committed to making Jacksboro a community that commands attention. In efforts to enhance business retention and expansion and improve quality of life for their citizens and visitors, Jacksboro leaders have developed a sound, forward-thinking strategic plan.

**“One person, no matter how great a leader, cannot change the way things have been done. It takes many people willing to wear many different hats.”**

The impetus for this strategic plan came during a visit by a new industry considering a move to town, and the questions this company had for community leaders. In the past, such companies may have been attracted to Jacksboro because of tax credits, abatements, no-interest loans, and the city’s ability to provide infrastructure.

However, this new industry had a much different focus: the schools. Among the company’s questions were, “What are your schools like?”, “What recreational facilities and activities do the schools offer?”, “What are the assessment scores of the students?”, and “What is the

high school drop out rate?” The company was also interested in land availability for new housing

Local entrepreneur and owner of PE Designs, Phyllis Maxey Elenburg said, “The EDC has really jumpstarted everything. In my opinion we are really coming together.”



**The New Depot in Jacksboro**

development.

Realizing something had to change if Jacksboro was going to attract industry, a few concerned citizens united and hammered out a strategic plan. Getting a 4B sales tax started allowed the city to establish the Jacksboro Economic Development Corporation (JEDC) and hire Lynda Pack as executive director. Through private donations and JEDC funds in place, an aggressive revitalization of downtown was undertaken. Within a year, 50 new jobs were created. A school bond passed public vote after the second try.



**The New Jacksboro High School**

Critical issues in community and economic development face almost every rural community in Texas. When folks with a common goal and courage unite, great things can happen. We need to take a good look at communities like Jacksboro that are addressing those issues.

**“A serious line of communication and cooperation among all the stakeholders must be established and priorities set.”**



**Don’t forget about the 2012  
Texas Rural Challenge!**

**June 13 & 14, 2012**

**San Marcos, Texas**

# Rural Grant Sources



Side of a building on the square in Hamilton, Texas

Places to Look for Grants	Description of Grants Listed
<a href="#">Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations</a>	A nonprofit organization looking to support, strengthen and keep nonprofit communities together by offering a variety of tools through funding and programs.
<a href="#">Southern Rural Development Center</a>	This center provides a bimonthly newsletter with updates about numerous regional and national funding opportunities.
<a href="#">State Office of Rural Health</a>	The SORH site lists grant opportunities that are dedicated to serving the health needs of those in rural Texas.
<a href="#">Texas Department of Agriculture Grants and Services</a>	This site lists a variety of programs and funds to help enhance farms, rural business development, help establish permanent jobs, and the production of agriculture.
<a href="#">Rural Assistance Center</a>	This center lists a variety of different rural grant programs and contains a database which can be searched by type, sponsor, and topic.
<a href="#">Health Resources and Services Administration</a>	HRSA makes grants to organizations to improve and expand health care services for underserved people. One focus area is rural health.
<a href="#">Grants.gov</a>	Grants.gov is your source to FIND and APPLY for federal grants.

**“Applying for grants is like fishing. You have to have the right bait and fish many different ponds at the same time”**  
**-Victoria Constance, Vision Bridge Consulting, LLC**

**Cheryl L Hudec, Associate Director – Center for Rural Studies**

Unfortunately there is no one-stop-shop when it comes to searching for grants. Often I come across the perfect grant opportunity, only to find I am either too late or have only a few days to write a proposal.

I have learned that I have to continuously be tuned in to the various grant databases and lists available on the world wide web. I also understand that with a limited staff who have numerous other duties and tasks, it is extremely difficult to find time to search for future funding.

With these issues in mind, we have provided a list of sites (above) that the Center visits often to search for rural-focused grants.

Here are some tips that I like to keep in mind when searching.

TIP: If the site offers a regular newsletter or email updates, it may be a good idea to sign up, as these often provide the most recent and upcoming funding opportunities and lessens the need to continuously check the site.

TIP: Agencies often put calls out at the same time every year (if funding is available). Even if you miss a deadline, put it on you calendar for next year. It is likely to

appear again, and this time you’ll be ready.

TIP: Don’t forget about private grant sources. There are foundation databases out there that can be utilized for regular searches. Find one and use it.

TIP: Don’t wait for them to come to you. While it may seem impossible, try to set aside some regular time to search for funding opportunities.

TIP: Create a list of most promising sources and search these as regularly as possible.

TIP: Use the buddy system. A good way to keep up with all of the opportunities and deadlines is to keep in touch with your network of people that can help “keep an eye out

# Texas Rural Internship Program

## Texas Department of Agriculture Seeks Communities to Participate in Rural Internship Program

The Texas Department of Agriculture is seeking proposals from communities interested in participating in the Texas Rural Internship Program. The program introduces urban college students to rural Texas by inviting them to live and work in a small community for four to eight weeks during the summer.

The Texas Rural Internship Program, provides much-needed interaction between urban and rural Texas, promotes rural Texas to attract and retain a talented workforce, helps develop some of today's talented college students into tomorrow's leaders, and cultivates

*"I realized that in rural communities there are a handful of people who hold many different positions and statuses but all work together to make a positive impact in the community."*

**Kamesha Walker,**  
2011 Rural Intern

ambassadors for rural Texas.

Through the internship program, TDA works with the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University and Texas Tech University to facilitate the pairing of students with prospective communities. Communities are responsible for assigning a local coordinator to work with a host family to provide room and board for students.

Any rural Texas community willing to host a college student intern for one or two summer sessions is eligible.



**2011 Texas Rural Interns: Kamesha Walker, Giddings and Kayla Clark, Snyder.**

To view presentations from last year's interns [click here](#).

[Click here](#) for more information and to request an application.

# Southern Rural Development Center

## Regional Resource for Rural Development Activities

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC), one of our nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers, works with land-grant institutions, public universities, and other key entities to address the critical rural development needs of people and places in the rural South.

The goals of the SRDC are to:

- Stimulate the formation of multi-state research teams
- Coordinate the development and revision of educational materials and maintain a centralized repository of educational resources
- Organize and deliver high priority rural development research and educational workshops/conferences
- Provide leadership for the preparation of science-based rural

development policy reports

- Build partnerships that link the South's land-grant university system with other key entities committed to rural development activities in the region

We encourage you to visit the [SRDC's website](#). There you will find publications on rural and community development topics, as well as educational curricula and information on upcoming trainings and events.

# Rural Community Development

## *Community-Based Planning— Crockett, Texas*

Members of the Mary Allen Museum discuss various events, activities, and tasks for the organization.



Throughout the month of November, members of the Mary Allen Museum of Art and History were gearing

up to hold a community-wide meeting in Crockett, Texas to share their mission, progress, and future plans with the public. The meeting was held on December 1, 2011 and there were approximately 20 people in attendance representing cities, historical commissions, non-profit organizations, universities, the state representative, Joe Barton's office, and even a Crockett high school student.

*“By much slothfulness  
the building decayeth,  
and through idleness  
of the hands the house  
droppeth through.”*

*Ecclesiastes*

*10:18*

The meeting was considered a grand success. There was extensive discussion regarding possibilities for the museum; some ideas that had never been considered before. There was great support for the erection of a sign saying “The Future Site of the Mary Allen Museum of Art and History”, and one individual offered to donate money toward that cause. Six of the attendees volunteered to serve on the Advisory Board for the Museum. Following the meeting there was expression of the need for additional community-wide meetings across the region in other communities which is a venture that will be discussed in upcoming board meetings.

Along with the regular fundraisers there are several other activities that the organization has taken on in recent months. These include the development of

a [website](#) which not only provides information on the Mary Allen Museum but also allows for donations to be made electronically; digital archiving of interviews from Mary Allen College Alumni; and researching other African American Museums and the local demographics and needs that the Museum might meet.

The combination of these activities that build organizational and individual capacity and the integration with the local community and region aim to bring multiple resources together to promote the progress of this great project: the ultimate restoration of the Mary Allen College building and transformation into the Mary Allen Museum of African American Art and History.

On Sunday February 26, the Museum will be holding a statewide event and fundraiser in honor of National Black History Month. To find out more information visit the [website](#) or contact the organization.



**Jean Shepherd, President of  
the Mary Allen Museum  
organization, leads the  
community-wide meeting in  
Crockett, Texas**

*For a background of this project, see the [Center's previous newsletter](#).*

# Texas Community Development Institute

**March 5 – 9, 2012**

Texas Community Development Institute (CDI) is designed to train community development professionals and volunteers in the techniques of modern leadership and management of economic growth efforts.

Texas CDI is part of a national network of institutes endorsed by the Community Development Council (CDC).

Since the program’s inception, hundreds of community leaders from throughout the country, many from Texas, have participated in the program.

The comprehensive program curriculum is designed to meet the increasing challenges facing community developers in today’s changing society and is applicable for community leaders from towns and cities of all sizes.

CDI approaches community development as both a process and a program. It seeks to develop an individual’s ability to identify community problems, set goals, encourage liaison with outside agencies, stimulate community interaction, and bring groups together to support competitive economic development, human resource development and quality of life issues.

**For more information**

**and to register:**

[LoneStar.edu/cdi](http://LoneStar.edu/cdi)

## Rural Events

Who	What	When	Where
Texas Association of Non-Profits in Texas	<a href="#">Essential Grant Skills</a>	Feb. 1-2	Houston
Texas Association of Non-Profits in Texas	<a href="#">Effective Grant Writing</a>	Feb. 7	Austin
Texas Economic Development Council	<a href="#">Webinar Business Retention &amp; Expansion</a>	Feb. 8	Online
Eagle Ford Consortium	<a href="#">Creating a Sustainable Pathway</a>	Mar. 1-2	San Antonio
Texas Community Development Institute	<a href="#">Community Development Institute</a>	Mar. 5-9	The Woodlands
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Administering Local Hotel Occupancy Tax and Spending Tax Dollars Wisely</a>	Mar. 6	Bastrop
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Developing an Historic Preservation Program</a>	Mar. 7	Waco
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Developing Successful Festivals and Events</a>	Mar. 20	Beeville
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Public Finance for Cities, Counties &amp; Special Districts</a>	Mar. 21	Bastrop
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Business Assessment Matrix (BAM): 17 Keys to Your Business Success</a>	Mar. 22	Paris
Texas Association of Non-Profits in Texas	<a href="#">Social Media for Nonprofits – Should You Get On The Bandwagon?</a>	Mar. 29	Denison
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Grant Writing for Community Leaders</a>	Apr. 17	Post
Texas Economic Development Council	<a href="#">Spring Basic Economic Development Course</a>	Apr. 17-20	Rockwall
Texas Leadership Institute	<a href="#">Business Assessment Matrix (BAM): 17 Keys to Your Business Success</a>	Apr. 26	Plainview

**For a calendar of events visit**

**the Texas Rural Innovators events page at [www.ruraltx.org](http://www.ruraltx.org)**





**CENTER FOR RURAL STUDIES:  
RESEARCH & OUTREACH**

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*The mission of the Center for Rural Studies is to assist in the building, strengthening, and maintaining of rural Texas communities.*

Thank you for taking the time to explore this issue of *Rural Conversations*. Our hope is that *Rural Conversations* encourages all of us who hold a passion for rurality to work together toward the goal of allowing rural Texas to flourish.

What you can expect next time: an exploration of the definition of “rural”; a feature on the Texas Rural Foundation; an update on the Community-Based Planning Process in Crockett, Texas; and another rural community success story.

[www.shsu.edu/ruralcenter](http://www.shsu.edu/ruralcenter)

If you would like to submit something to be published in *Rural Conversations*, please contact Cheryl L. Hudec, Associate Director of the Center for Rural Studies at ruralcenter@shsu.edu.

If you wish to be removed from the mailing list for *Rural Conversations*, please email Cheryl L. Hudec at ruralcenter@shsu.edu.

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