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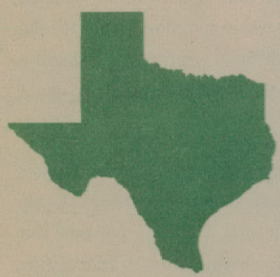


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The Rural Texan

Spring 2003

Office of Rural Community Affairs

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Rural Texas Leaders Take Action to Assist with Shuttle Recovery

By Linda Trinh, ORCA

It was approximately 8 am, Central Standard Time, on February 1, 2003 when the space shuttle Columbia was 207,135 feet over north-central Texas and residents in Texas and Louisiana reported loud noise and bright balls – shuttle debris – in the sky. In a spectacle that stunned the nation, the shuttle disintegrated in multiple fireballs as it streaked across the clear blue sky during reentry from orbit.

A crew of seven astronauts—six American and one Israeli—was aboard the shuttle, which was returning from a 16-day science mission.

As of March 6, 2003, the Federal Emergency Management Agency reports that the search and recovery mission for debris and human remains from the shuttle Columbia currently totals over \$137

million, which includes personnel, payroll, travel, and other costs. Reimbursement costs for state and local governments are approximately \$350,000 to Louisiana and almost \$245,000 for Texas. Expenses eligible for reimbursement include search and recovery costs, emergency medical care, security in the affected area and activation of emergency operations centers.

Since mid-February, more than 3,000 workers per day have searched 103,000 acres collecting 22,100 pieces of debris. The search has used 32 helicopters and 9 fixed-wing aircraft; seven boats and underwater sonar units have been used to lakes and reservoirs.

Many of the small pieces of debris that survived the breakup

(Continued on page 11)

Rural Texans Give Legislative Solutions at ORCA Rural Summit

By Jill McFarren, ORCA

The results from ORCA's Inaugural Rural Summit are in! The day-and-a-half long event, held February 19th and 20th in Austin, brought together federal, state, county, and local officials and representatives, community leaders, stakeholders, rural Texans, and others representing various rural interests to discuss rural issues and develop policy suggestions for the 78th Legislative Session.

"This Inaugural Rural Summit marked the first time a diverse range of rural Texas interest groups came together to define rural policy suggestions for the state of Texas," explained Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, MS, ORCA's Executive Director. "Our goal was to provide a forum for open discussions and decisions necessary to form a list of policy suggestions that encourage and enhance the support of rural Texas communities. I believe we met that objective."

Success in gathering the needed information was a result of the facilitated breakout session model used during the event. The model provided for interaction and the development of lists of key perspectives in the various rural-focused discussions.

Specific rural topics were assigned to each group. Designed to be congruent with the committees of the Rural Caucus of the 77th Legislature, the group topic assignments included:

- Group 1: Health and Human Services, for example: Medicaid/Medicare, nursing homes, welfare, rural healthcare
- Group 2: Education, for example: Public education, higher education, teacher health insurance, teacher shortage

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From the Desk Of . . .

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The Executive Committee Chair

Just as all of you are working to tighten your budget belts, so too is your Office of Rural Community Affairs. Governor Perry has asked all state agencies to reduce their budgets for programs, services and activities funded by state general revenue by 12 percent over the next biennium. ORCA's leadership is considering its options, and working to identify all possible opportunities to meet this requirement with the least impact to rural Texans.

As we look to address this goal, we are exploring creative ways to accomplish the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness at the lowest possible cost. ORCA's options may include a revision to program administration in the way of loan guarantees, or focusing more clearly on supporting projects that maximize job creation and retention, or perhaps awarding fewer grants per program cycle. The agency's travel budget is also being reviewed. Future staff travel may be revised to require combining multiple visits to rural Texas communities, or combining purposes of travel activities.

For the rural Texans we serve, this may mean more participation in developing and implementing local projects, or a change in the way everyone communicates with each other. It may mean rural Texans will have to rely more heavily on telephones and fax machines as well as electronic communications through the internet and email when working with the agency. Teleconferencing may be a beneficial consideration.

We are all in this together, and our solutions may be limited only by our willingness to be innovative and our ability to make a break from the traditional ways of the past. As I've said before, it takes commitment to make changes that may require giving up old ways, boundaries, and turf to find solutions to addressing today's needs.

Meanwhile, ORCA's most important consideration is the continued delivery of programs and services that benefit the many Texas we serve. I assure you, no rock will go unturned in our exploration and identification of solutions; ORCA's dedicated leadership and staff remain strongly committed to supporting rural Texans.

Adversity brings out the best in us, as it always has. Just think of the people who settled our state and your neighbors who continue to call rural Texas "home."

As always we remain open to your suggestions, and we welcome your ideas and success stories.

William M. Jeter III
Chair, ORCA Executive Committee

ORCA Executive Committee Meets in Rural Areas

Last year ORCA's Executive Committee continued its commitment to listening to rural Texans and hearing perspectives at the local level. Meetings were held in Albany (Shackelford County), Big Spring (Howard County), Carrizo Springs (Dimmit County), Childress (Childress County), Jefferson (Marion County), Monahans (Ward County), Nacogdoches (Nacogdoches County), and Stephenville (Erath County).

By holding Executive Committee meetings in rural communities, the agency hopes to provide an opportunity for everyone to better understand rural needs and issues, and also helps the agency's leadership guide the administration of ORCA's programs, services, and activities.

The goal of ORCA's nine-member Executive Committee is to guide the development of the agency and define its policy and philosophy. The committee is composed of three appointees each by the Office of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House.

Executive Committee members include:

Member	City	County
David Alders	Nacogdoches	Nacogdoches
Nicki Harle	Baird	Callahan
Carol Harrell	Jefferson	Marion
William Jeter	Bryan	Brazos
Wallace Klusmann	Fredericksburg	Gillespie
Jim Roberts	Lubbock	Lubbock
Lydia Saenz	Carrizo Springs	Dimmit
Patrick Wallace	Athens	Henderson
Michael Waters	Abilene	Taylor

For more information about ORCA's Executive Committee members or meetings, visit ORCA's website.

The Executive Director

The establishment of the new Office of Rural Community Affairs offers some new and unique opportunities to address issues facing our rural communities. The work that went into the creation of the agency by the Texas Legislature noted some common issues. Most of us know the list – the declining population, young people moving away, difficulties maintaining schools and health care facilities, difficulties attracting and retaining jobs, and others. Seeking solutions to those issues for the future of our rural communities remains the ongoing challenge. There is a need for some new thinking and approaches.

It could be much simpler if it didn't involve that one thing so many of us have trouble with – change! Although our rural communities are each unique in any number of ways, a common theme for the future is change. Most folks really don't want to change. Change is difficult, particularly without a roadmap of some kind. Luckily, there are many leaders and organizations working on a variety of roadmaps.

A roadmap requires two critical pieces of information – a starting point (where the community is now) and a destination (where the community wants to go). Sounds easy, but it doesn't seem to be. Change is often avoided, too often until it is too late or until a crisis hits. Figuring out how our communities face the change process and work their way through is important. It is a critical first step. The future of a community may depend upon it. Working together, perhaps we can manage change better and help focus it at the individual community and area level as decided by the local residents and leaders.

Let's look at rural areas from another perspective. Urban and suburban communities, and maybe society in general, seem to be moving toward a world of specialization. There are enough human and financial resources to develop specialists for almost any facet of daily life. But in our rural areas, the opposite is true. Generalization is the way rural survives. Rural leaders have to wear so many hats, be involved in any number of activities and organizations, and balance all kinds of issues and projects. They must learn much about a good number of different areas and issues. They must generalize because they don't typically have the human or financial resources to specialize.

Generalization requires a good support system and access to information, technical assistance and resources. There are a good number of organizations and groups that provide some of these resources. But it is a big task for a big state with a big rural area. It is also complicated by the fact that life and needs are different in the various parts of our state.

The Office of Rural Community Affairs offers another opportunity, another partner. Seeking new ideas and new solutions, working to build new partnerships, and challenging each of us to think outside that mythical box and individual silos are some of the directions of the Executive Committee and staff of the new agency. It is a task of both love and commitment. Together, we can work to manage change and support our local leaders and communities.

Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, MS
Executive Director

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To subscribe to **The Rural Texan**, or for more information about ORCA, contact:

Office of Rural Community Affairs
P.O. Box 12877, Austin, TX 78711
Phone: 512-936-6701 Fax: 512-936-6776
Toll free: 800-544-2042

E-mail: orca@orca.state.tx.us Web: www.orca.state.tx.us

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ORCA PHONE LIST

Executive Office

Black, Romona	512-936-6715
Hill, Jerry	512-936-6708
Keeran, Duane	512-936-6711
Knopp, Pamela	512-936-6706
Morgan, Susan	512-936-6710
Tessen, Sam	512-936-6704

Administrative Support Services

Garrison, Yolanda	512-936-7898
Kindle, Dondii	512-936-6703
Miller, Cindy	512-936-6702
Sandoval, Veronica	512-936-7896
Scott, June	512-936-7884
Valenzuela, Rebecca	512-936-6716

Accounting

Limas, Daniel	512-936-6720
McGlasson, Robert	512-936-6707
Newberry, Phoebe	512-936-6718
Truong, Lai	512-936-6717

Communications

McFarren, Jill	512-936-6712
Trinh, Linda	512-936-6714

Community Development

Boyd, Gary	512-936-0232
Cardenas, Oralia	512-936-7890
Cardiff, Sandy	512-936-6722
Dial, Wayne	903-572-0111
Garcia, Gus	512-936-7876
Hartley, Julie	512-936-7883
Larkin, Jacqueline	512-936-7877
Leos, Erica	512-936-7875
Lopez, Alvino	806-794-6938
Medel, Mary Ann	512-936-7888
Mendoza, Steve	512-936-7894
Midura, Joe	512-936-7880
Negrete, Refugio	512-936-7891
Odom, Kelle	512-936-7886
Rapier, Richard	512-936-7902
Schreiner, Kathleen	512-936-7885
Stevenson, Rob	512-936-6724
Swango, Stephen	512-936-7895
Terry, Bonny	512-936-7899
Torres, Clara	512-936-6739
Vallejo, Cynthia	512-936-6740
Vistein, Jeffrey	512-936-7878
Weatherby, Tim	512-936-0247
Wyatt, Mark	512-936-6725

Information Services

Beissner, Robert	512-936-7901
Eguzo, Celestine	512-936-6721
Huffman, Roger	512-936-7893
Lizcano, Olga	512-936-7889
Wei, William	512-936-6735

Outreach & Training Services

Funderburk, Bill	512-936-6701
Gibson Jr, Clyde	512-936-6731
Hoefling, Stacy	512-936-6738
Stone, Charles	512-936-6737

Program Compliance and Audit

Arce, John	512-936-7882
Cruz, Theresa	512-936-6719
Ku, Mike	512-936-6723
Smith, Mary Alice	512-936-7887
Ramos, Joe	512-936-7881
Watson, Alice	512-936-7900
Wuest, Robert	512-936-7892

Research, Policy, and Planning

Allis, Jennifer	512-936-6727
Beverly, Eric	512-936-6701
Shillis, Jacquie	512-936-6726
White, Kim	512-936-6713

Rural Health

Darnell, David	512-936-6730
Easley, Michael	512-936-6709
Hofmann, Jennifer	512-936-6734
Houston, Robin	512-936-6732
Lewis, Alan	512-936-6733
Ngo, Quang	512-936-6729



Guest Column

Rural Caucus: A Voice for Rural Texans Under the Dome

By Representative Robert "Robby" Cook, Chair, Rural Caucus

During this legislative session, rural and urban neighbors are working together to accomplish the tasks we were sent here to accomplish. We are determined to find solutions for Texas' budget crisis while also maintaining services and preserving the resources of this great state for future Texans. We are faced with the challenge of finding a viable way to finance public education ensuring that there is "no child left behind" in Texas:

a public school finance system that fairly distributes the cost of education and does not place the burden of financing our schools on property owners. My colleagues and I are working to reduce insurance rates for homeowners, reduce medical malpractice insurance rates, decrease the cost of health insurance, and

encourage growth and a prosperous economy in Texas.

Rural Texas is an influential entity this legislative session, not only in the large number of citizens calling rural areas home, but also in the support that rural areas provide to the major metropolitan areas of Texas. My colleagues and I are endeavoring to maintain the values and way of life that make rural Texas unique and desirable. I hope that rural Texans will join our efforts by working to improve their communities from within. I firmly believe that good government starts at the local level. Rural Texans have the talent we need for a bright Texas future.

(See related article on page 4)

ORCA Welcomes new Executive Committee Member

By Jill McFarren, ORCA

ORCA welcomed Nicki Harle of Baird in Callahan County to the agency's governing board. Harle is the first new appointee named to the Committee since the agency's inception in late 2000. Harle was tapped by Speaker of the House Tom Craddick to serve on the nine-member Committee, which guides the development of the agency, and defines its policy and philosophy.

"Nicki Harle is an outstanding person who well understands the issues important to rural Texas as well as the hopes and dreams of rural Texans," said House Speaker Tom Craddick. "I have full faith in her and predict she will be a precedent-setting leader for this vital, yet fledgling, state agency."

Born and raised in Columbus (Colorado County), Harle serves as the executive director of Texas Midwest Community Network, a coalition of 41 communities representing 25 counties working together to recruit business in a region that encompasses portions of North, Central and West Texas. Harle has also served on the Baird Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors, Abilene Airport Advisory Committee, and the Abilene Task Force for Community Development. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Southwest Texas State University and has completed economic

development courses from Texas Engineering Extension Service at Texas A & M University.

"Finding ways to help rural communities has been my passion for the past decade," noted Harle. "Having this opportunity to serve on the ORCA Executive Committee is a privilege and honor."

Harle will serve a six-year term on the Committee, comprised of three appointees each by the Office of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House. Harle replaces Kent Sharp of Big Spring in Howard County, who was appointed by House Speaker James E. "Pete" Laney in 2000. Sharp, an Inaugural Member of the Committee, made significant contributions to the establishment of the young agency. Harle's fellow committee members note that she will also provide a high level of dedicated leadership to the agency.

Two of Harle's fellow committee members, David Alders (Nacogdoches) and Lydia Saenz (Carrizo Springs), have been reappointed to serve terms also slated to end in 2009. Alders, originally appointed by Lt. Governor Bill Ratliff in 2000 was reappointed by Lt. Governor David Dewhurst. Saenz' term was extended by Governor Rick Perry, who originally appointed her to the committee in 2000.

Telemedicine Project Brings Medicine, Education Together

The Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board (TIFB) has awarded the Cuero Community Hospital in Dewitt county \$492,415 to expand its school telemedicine program to include the surrounding school districts of Westhoff and Meyersville Independence School Districts, as well as further deploy telemedicine systems to the remaining schools within the Cuero Independent School District.

Using telemedicine technology by HealthCare Vision (HCV), a school nurse can connect to a local physician. The telemedicine equipment and software allows the school nurse at one location to gather information on a student health condition including vital readings, clinical images, clinical notation, and audio/video clips and then send the medical information to the student's local primary care physician. The school nurse can also use the telemedicine software and instrumentation to screen children for asthma and diabetes. The grant will allow even more students, families, and healthcare providers to experience these benefits and services resulting from the telemedicine equipment.

For more information about HealthCare Vision, Inc., contact Craig Walker at 512-832-6710. For more information about TIFB, call 888-533-8432 or visit www.tifb.state.tx.us.

Water: Preparing Today for Texas' Future in the 21st Century

By Linda Trinh, ORCA

ORCA is working with the US Army Corps of Engineers on a special project specifically designed to educate rural Texans about local, regional and state water issues. The joint effort will help rural Texas communities plan for their future. Combined with projects of other agencies, it will help increase the level of awareness of water issues in rural areas.

The components of this project include:

- Conducting an inventory of small water projects and technologies and barriers to implementing those technologies;
- Hosting a conference on small size water technology;
- Providing leadership development to help educate local leaders on the various aspects of water issues; and
- Outreach.

The project promises to reach beyond the local leadership level with all rural Texans being encouraged to participate in the effort. Rural residents throughout the state will be invited to learn about local, regional, and state water issues, including supply, conservation, drought planning and recycling. Through education and practice, rural Texans will be more able to ensure their water supply is available for generations to come.

ORCA's primary role will be to organize and facilitate discussions between key stakeholders and policy-makers, and develop leadership training and education tools for rural Texans.

Out of six submitted proposals, ORCA selected the University of Texas-Pan American's Office of Center Operations and Community Services (CoSERVE) to complete one of three components of the "Water: Preparing Today for Texas' Future in the 21st Century" Project.

CoSERVE was chosen to conduct a study on the inventories of small water projects, technologies and impediments. A division of UT-Pan American's Office of External Affairs, CoSERVE acts

as a catalyst for business and economic development, job creation, and income growth through the provision of a broad range of educational and technical assistance activities targeted to businesses, public officials, economic development corporations and community development planning organizations.

The component that CoSERVE is currently working on focuses in identifying, inventorying and describing examples of pending and/or successful water projects with a common denominator of applicability in rural or small communities.

The following are proposed activities within this component of the project:

- Define parameters of successful water projects and technologies with a common denominator of applicability in rural or small communities;
- Identify factors to be included in database;
- Determine methodology for identifying successful projects;
- Design template for database;
- Assign responsibility for actual identification and collection;
- Collect information on successful projects as defined;
- Collate information into a report; and
- Publish report for stakeholders.

CoSERVE staff has worked with data for over 10 years and is a State Data Center Affiliate, in association with the Texas State Data Center. Some of the previous projects that CoSERVE have conducted include guides to Texas programs and community needs assessment studies for Hidalgo County, City of McAllen, and City of Mission.

They will have three months to complete this project from the date that the contract was signed on March 1, 2003.

Assistance for this article provided by Jennifer Allis, ORCA.

Big Payoff from Renewables

Studies Show Federal Clean Energy Standard Would Mean Money for Rural America

By Linda Trinh, ORCA

The Texas Legislature has declared the oil patch town of McCamey in Upton County the Wind Energy Capital of Texas. McCamey was born in 1926, after oil literally gushed from the ground out of one of the most productive oilfields ever discovered. The town later suffered as oil declined. Now, wind turbines dot mesas all around McCamey. They are generating power and profits for energy companies and lucrative royalties for landowners. Throughout Texas, more than 80,000 windmills are in use today.

Texas has become a world leader in wind power in the three years since then-Governor George W. Bush signed a statewide renewable electricity standard, Senate Bill 7 (76). The innovative energy policy helped fuel \$1 billion in investment in wind power during 2001 alone, and is pumping millions in much-needed tax revenues into parched school districts and local economies. Now the Texas policy is a national model for Congress, which is considering a federal renewable electricity standard that could spur renewables' development and spread its consumer and environmental benefits nationwide.

According to new research from the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Senate renewable electricity standard by 2020 would produce enough renewable electricity to power about 53 million typical homes and would save consumers about \$3.8 billion annually in reduced energy bills.

Renewables currently employ 2,500 workers with a payroll of \$75 million. With a 10 percent goal by 2020, renewables would employ 8,500 workers with an annual payroll of \$255 million. Wind projects would pump \$216 million into local tax bases and pay landowner royalties of \$30 million annually.

Texas Wind Plants:

Project	County
<i>(Pre SB 7 (76))</i>	
• Texas Wind Power Project	Culberson
• Fort Davis	Jeff Davis
• Big Spring I and II	Howard
• Southwest Mesa	Upton/Crockett
• Delaware Mountain	Culberson
<i>(Post SB 7 (76))</i>	
• Woodward Mt. Wind Ranch	Pecos
• Indian Mesa	Pecos
• King Mt. Wind Ranch 1, 2 and 3	Upton
• Trent Mesa	Taylor
• Desert Sky Wind Farm	Pecos
• Hueco Mt. Wind Ranch	Hudspeth
• Llano Estacado Wind Ranch	Carson

Texas' Renewable Portfolio Standard, signed into law by former Gov. George Bush in 1999, specifies that systems are to be built in Texas by 2009 to meet the 2,000 Megawatts of new renewable capacity. (A megawatt measures the hourly consumption of power.) The current cost competitiveness of wind power has Texas five years ahead of its renewables construction schedule, almost half way to meeting its 2,000 Megawatt goal.

Assistance for this article provided by Jennifer Allis, ORCA.

US Farm Legislation Offers Environmental Benefits for All

Offering the largest boost in natural resources conservation programs in the history of farm legislation, the 2002 Farm Bill expands the opportunities for US farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices that benefit all Americans.

The new programs emphasize conservation on working lands, which allow farmers and ranchers to continue producing food and fiber while improving the nation's natural resources. They also introduce new opportunities for local stakeholders to help establish conservation priorities.

An array of conservation programs in the new Farm Bill offers incentives to agricultural producers, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, and the Farmland Protection Program. Two new programs are the Conservation Security Program and Grassland Reserve Program.

For more information about these conservation programs and how to become involved, contact the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) at 254-773-2250 or visit their website at www.tsswcb.state.tx.us.

Rural Caucus Elects Chair, Addresses Rural Issues

By Suzie Loonam, Office of Representative Robert "Robby" Cook

The Rural Caucus of the Texas Legislature held its second meeting of the 78th Legislative Session on February 5, during which time, Representative Robert L. "Robby" Cook was unanimously elected to serve as Chair of the Caucus. Representative Cook, from Eagle Lake, has served as a board member and 4th Vice-Chair for the Caucus since it began in 1999. Membership in the Rural Caucus includes 83 House and Senate Members, as well as the Commissioner of Agriculture, Susan Combs.

The Caucus exists as an informational source for members of the Texas Legislature. Weekly meetings are being held throughout the session. The discussions during these meetings will provide members with valuable insight into issues that affect the rural areas of Texas, such as rural healthcare, transportation and education. The Caucus exists to provide information on the particular impact to rural Texas as legislative members from all parts of Texas work together to find positive solutions.

Check the ORCA website for a calendar of upcoming rural events.



Spotlight on . . .

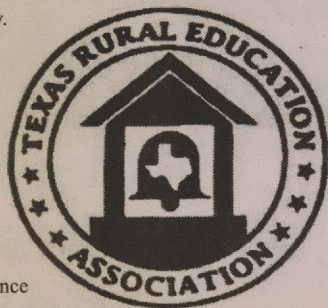
TREA Promotes Educational Opportunities

By Scott Ferguson, TREA

The Texas Rural Education Association (TREA) is a nonprofit organization, formally affiliated with the National Rural Education Association (NREA). TREA is a statewide organization promoting quality education opportunities and experience for all children in rural public schools, which will enable them to live and compete in a global society.

TREA Goals:

- Pursue the quality of excellence in education; to give identity, voice and exposure to the particular quality of rural schools; to enhance the quality of life unique in the rural community.
- Inform the legislature, the state board of education and other such agencies or groups of the concerns, needs, and research of the association to effectively influence legislation, rules, regulations and policy-makers.
- Formulate and promote plans, proposals, subsidies in service and curricula, which will be in the best interests of the membership.
- Develop a database through research and the compilation of existing data sources.
- Inform and solicit the support of the membership organizations.
- Support the integrity of rural school districts.
- Support and actively participate in efforts and activities of the NREA.
- Provide scholarships and other benefits to students of Texas Public Schools.



The NREA is the oldest established national organization of its kind in the US. Formerly known as the REA, the Association traces its origins back to 1907 when it was originally founded as the Department of Rural Education. Through the years, it has evolved as a strong and respected organization of rural school administrators, teachers, board members, parents, regional service agency personnel, researchers, and business and industry representatives.

For more information on TREA, please visit www.txrea.com or call 903-572-8551.

Catch an Exhibit! Rural Women at Work (1930 - 1960)

Exhibit at the Capitol in Austin, Texas
May 26 - 30, 2003

Look at the lives of rural Texas women and the nature and meaning of changes that swept across everyday life in rural Texas in the middle years of this century.

www.public-humanities.org/exhibitlist.html

The City of Lamesa

By Linda Trinh, ORCA

Lamesa, Texas, the county seat of Dawson County, is in the heart of the South Plains of West Texas. It is located midway between Lubbock and Midland - Odessa. With over 600,000 people living within a 75-mile radius, Lamesa is at the center of the largest population concentration between Dallas - Fort Worth and El Paso.

Paleo-Indians were Lamesa's first inhabitants, who hunted in the area and camped along Sulphur Springs Draw about 17,000 years ago. In later times, the Apaches and later Comanches used the draw as campsites for their hunting activities on the plains.

Lamesa was plotted into lots by M.C. Lindsey, Frank Connor, J. F. Barron, and several others about two miles south of the town of Chicago, which had been established in 1893.

Carved out of the home section of Frank Conner's Ranch, the city of Lamesa had its beginnings in July 1093 on a block of 160 acres. Earlier the town site had been part of the large Slaughter Ranch, famous for its "Lazy S" brand. By this time ranching had been established in the area for more than 30 years.

The first school opened in Lamesa in 1902, telephone service started in 1905, and daily mail service was initiated in 1906 via a stage line from Big Spring. The Santa Fe Railroad operating as the Panhandle and Santa Fe Railway Company began rail service to Lamesa October 1, 1910.

Incorporated in 1917, Lamesa's first large project in 1925 included the building of a new city hall, a water and sewer systems, and brick streets around the square. An adopted, home-rule charter establishing a council-manager form of government in 1945.

A new City Hall, located at 310 South Main was dedicated in 1963. The Old City Hall at the corner of South First and Dallas was remodeled as the new Public Safety Building housing the police and fire departments. In 1993, the city purchased the old Lamesa Federal/Bluebonnet Savings & Loan Building at 601 South First Street and converted it into a new Municipal Building housing the city administration and police departments.

Lamesa's name, taken from the Spanish word Mesa meaning "Tableland," described the town's location on the high plateau of the South Plains.

Today, with a population of 10,809, Lamesa is located in one of the world's main cotton producing areas. Cattle ranching, agriculture and other related industries are the basis for Lamesa's economy. The recent introduction of high quality peanut production and wine vineyards are helping to create a more diverse agricultural economy. Additionally, oil production is a major factor in their regional and local economy.

Lamesa is home to many regular area events, including the May Fun Fest, Indian Canyon Art Show, Annual Rodeo & Fair, Octoberfest and Fourth of July celebrations. The local Dawson County Museum features relics from the early farming, ranching, and oil field days of the area. Located on the southeast corner of the town square, the building was the original pharmacy and soda fountain.

For more information on Lamesa, contact the Lamesa Chamber of Commerce at 806-872-2181 or visit www.ci.lamesa.tx.us.

Health Professional Recruitment Opportunities for Rural Texas Abound at Annual Event

By Robin S. Houston

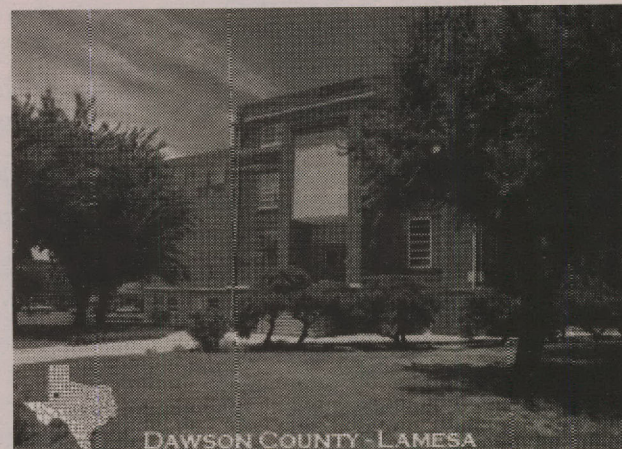
This fall, representatives from rural Texas communities and health professionals will have an exceptional opportunity to come together to discuss practice opportunities available at HealthFind 2003. HealthFind is a comprehensive expo held annually to encourage health professionals to practice in rural areas. This exciting event provides a "job fair" atmosphere for rural community leaders to recruit both health professionals already practicing and those still in training who are considering a rural practice and lifestyle.

This year, ORCA has expanded the breakout session topics to enrich the HealthFind experience. Some of the session topics and guest speakers will include physician contracts by Davis & Wilkerson, PC, practice start-up for residents by Texas Medical Association's Physician Services, and licensure information by

the State Board of Medical Examiners. With last year's overwhelming success, HealthFind is continuing its panel discussions of rural physicians and spouses and adding a panel discussion of midlevel providers. Any rural provider that would like to participate on the panel can contact ORCA for more information.

Rural communities are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this worthwhile occasion to meet a hundred plus health professionals in person looking for practice opportunities. HealthFind is a great opportunity for rural communities to maximize their recruitment and retention efforts and stretch their recruitment dollars.

HealthFind 2003, coordinated by ORCA, takes place at the Omni Southpark in Austin on September 6 and 7, 2003. For more information and to register, contact ORCA.



The Dawson County Courthouse located in Lamesa.

SRPH Dean Appointed to National Institutional Policy Strategies

Ciro V. Sumaya, MD, MPH, dean of the School of Rural Public Health (SRPH) at the Texas A & M University Health Science Center in College Station, was appointed to a new study committee that will examine diversity in the health care workforce. The National Academies Institute of Medicine (IOM) in Washington, DC created the national study committee to examine and recommend the institutional and policy strategies for increasing the diversity of the US health care workforce. The committee plans to focus on the areas of medicine, dentistry, nursing and mental health since they are among the largest professions.

Policy level issues include admissions practices, accreditation, financing and funding of health training and expanding community benefit requirements to allow nonprofit organizations to consider training as a benefit.

Appropriate to the topic, the Texas A & M Health Science Center boasts the second highest number of Hispanic minority students, second only to the University of Puerto Rico School of Public Health. "We are committed to diversity in our student body," said Sumaya. "It is important to reflect the makeup of the state of Texas, which is our constituency. As important, increasing the number of minority health care providers has a great chance of increasing access to quality care for minorities as well, thereby whole."

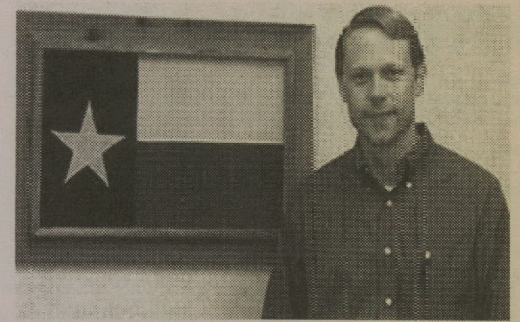
Rural Texas Practitioner Named One of US's Top Doctors

Dr. Jay Gruhlkey, Chief of Staff at Hardeman County Memorial Hospital, located in northwest Texas in the city of Quanah, traveled to Washington, DC to receive a prestigious honor on March 3, 2003.

Dr. Gruhlkey accepted a 2003 American Medical Association Excellence in Leadership Award. His award was in the Outstanding Young Physician category, presented annually to only 25 doctors nationwide under the age of 40 or in their first five years of practice.

The American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation Leadership Award Program recognizes medical students and resident and fellow physicians who have demonstrated non-clinical leadership in medical arenas, civic organizations and community service organizations. Recipients received an expense-paid trip to the AMA National Advocacy Conference held March 3-5, 2003 in Washington, DC.

Dr. Gruhlkey, born in Amarillo, Texas, is Board Certified in Family Practice. He received a degree in chemistry from Texas A&M University before attending medical school at The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.



Dr. Jay Gruhlkey received the American Medical Association Excellence in Leadership Award.

Graduate Academic Certificate Scholarship Program

Designed to recruit Library professionals in the youth services area!

Applications materials, instructions, and schedules are located on the Scholarship Program Website:

<http://courses.unt.edu/efiga/GACScholarshipProgram/index.htm>

Regional Administrator Receives Presidential Merit Award

Dr. Randy Farris, Dallas Regional Administrator and Senior Executive member was the recipient of the 2002 Presidential Meritorious Rank Award.

Each year, the President of the United States confers prestigious Distinguished and Meritorious Rank Awards on a select group of career members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). These outstanding senior executives consistently demonstrate integrity, commitment, and exceptional service to the American public over an extended period of time. They are leaders who successfully balance the needs and perspectives of their customers, stakeholders, and employees with organizational results.

Dr. Randy Farris received the Meritorious Rank Award for his "sustained accomplishment" as an outstanding leader in the administration of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) programs while focusing on protecting the health and safety of beneficiaries. Dr. Farris developed and implemented a strategy for protecting beneficiaries in the event of the financial failure of nursing homes and hospitals.

During a review of the administration of Medicare Partial Hospitalization benefits provided through Community Mental Health Centers in his region, Dr. Farris recommended procedures for ensuring that adequate mental health service providers were available to service beneficiaries if the Community Centers' Medicare payments were suspended due to misadministration. He played a key role in implementing a competitive bidding demonstration project designed to ensure the provision of quality medical equipment. Dr. Farris combines innovation and leadership with his clinical experience to ensure the health care security of beneficiaries.

Rural Communities Supported by Federally-Funded Projects

The following is a sampling of rural projects funded by ORCA's Texas Community Development Program.

Raymondville reduces water loss, increases capacity, fire protection

The city of Raymondville (Willacy County) recently completed a \$318,447 Community Development grant project, replacing old metal main water lines with new lines needed to increase capacity and fire protection and reduce water loss.

The city calculated unaccounted water loss of 88 million gallons of treated water annually due to the poor condition of the water lines, which were installed in 1936. The economic impact is already being realized as the water needs of a new private prison contracted for federal prisoners can now be supplied without the development of additional raw water resources from the Rio Grande River. The prison will bring 150 jobs to the community.

- Mary Alice Smith, ORCA

Junction repairs dam after disaster

The city of Junction (Kimble County) recently completed its repair of the South Llano River Dam and raw water intake structure damaged by the severe flooding in the fall of 2000. Without the repairs to the dam, the city's sole source of water, the potential failure of the dam due to severe bank erosion and damage to the dam itself may have resulted in a severe threat to the health and safety of Junction citizens. The city used its \$350,000 Disaster Relief grant from TCDP as the match required by the Emergency Watershed Program administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to successfully complete this project.

- Mary Alice Smith, ORCA

Community volunteers to provide labor for rural water projects

Volunteers in Upshur and Wood counties, and the communities of West Tawakoni (Hunt County) and Clint (El Paso County) are hard at work installing facilities for fire hydrants, sewer service and first time water connections in their communities. The projects are being supported by the Texas Small Towns Environment Program (Texas STEP), a unique self-help program.

STEP provides funding options for equipment, expertise, and technical assistance to rural communities experiencing water and wastewater problems. Communities and counties working with Texas STEP have saved more than 50 percent on retail construction costs while maximizing the number of citizens each project benefits. Residents provide a certain percentage of the labor and receive direction, technical expertise, and specialized equipment from ORCA and contract engineering crews.

- Cynthia Vallejo, ORCA

Plainview neighborhood leverages TCDP grant for first time sewer service, housing rehab

The city of Plainview (Hale County) has completed the development of new first time sewer lines with a \$250,000 Community Development award, which supplemented the total cost of the \$550,000 project. The city leveraged other funds for the project, including an award from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' HOME program that provided assistance for rehabilitating homes through forgivable loans.

- Alvino Lopez, ORCA

Among other criteria, all TCDP program-funded projects must benefit 51 percent low- to moderate-income Texans. Contact ORCA for more information on any of these projects or programs.

Rural Fire Prevention and Emergency Services District Lists Available

Check it out on ORCA's Website

State Housing Agency Reaches Out to Rural Developers

By Gus Garcia, ORCA

In an effort to increase participation in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) Rural Set-Aside, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) is now offering capacity building assistance to individuals or organizations interested in developing affordable rental housing in rural areas. The Capacity Building Services Section will provide assistance by identifying available training regarding the LIHTC program. Additionally, those interested in the Rural Set-Aside can schedule a one-on-one session with department staff to discuss potential development in rural areas or to evaluate a development's programmatic and financial feasibility for the LIHTC program.

If you are interested in receiving notification of training regarding the LIHTC program, contact the Capacity Building division at 512-475-1565 or rpeterso@tdhca.state.tx.us. If you have a proposed development in mind, interested in learning more about this effort, or considering participating in the 2004 LIHTC Application Cycle for the Rural Set-Aside, contact Brooke Boston at 512-475-3296 or bboston@tdhca.state.tx.us to arrange a meeting with staff.

The Office of Rural Community Affairs and TDHCA will jointly administer the Rural Set-Aside under the LIHTC program to ensure the maximum use and geographic distribution of housing tax credits in rural areas. For more information, contact ORCA.

Physical Infrastructure Progress in Texas Colonias

By Yvette E. Sanchez, Office of the Secretary of State Gwen Shea

Water and Wastewater Projects

Since the inception of the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) Economically Distressed Areas Program in 1989 and ORCA's Texas Community Development Program in 1995, a total of \$566 million dollars have been allocated through combined efforts to improve the physical infrastructure in our Texas border area colonias.

As a result, a total of 110,088 colonia residents received access to water and wastewater services in Texas. In the future, a total of 286,587 residents will have received services by the completion of all state and federally funded projects.

Ending Colonia Proliferation

This past year three additional counties, Jim Hogg, Zapata and Hudspeth joined the rest of the Texas border counties in adopting the revised Model Subdivision Rules that regulate the development of new subdivisions. Additional counties who have adopted the

revised Model Subdivision Rules in working to prevent the proliferation of colonias include: El Paso, Dimmit, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Val Verde, Webb, Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy.

The Secretary of State (SOS) Colonia Ombudsmen continue to work closely with the Office of the Attorney General (AG) in identifying and referring cases of illegal colonia development. The AG's office is continuing to actively enforce laws to prevent the proliferation of colonias. While there are currently eight pending lawsuits in various stages of litigation against developers, the state is encountering fewer and fewer violations.

The AG's office is also developing a planning tool that will provide a more detailed checklist of requirements for community developers to assist with the correct interpretation of our state laws.

Paving Colonia Roads

In the last few months, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has entered into agreements with the 21 counties that have received state bond funds (Senate Bill 1296 (76)) since November 2001.

The counties entered into agreements with consultants and contractors to begin the design and construction work of paving colonia roads. In December 2002, TxDOT received the first invoices for work done on the colonia projects. About \$19,000 had been billed as of January 31, 2003.

Disaster Relief Update: Happy

By Jarrett Atkinson, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, Amarillo

On May 5, 2002, an F-5 tornado struck the city of Happy. As reported in the Summer 2002 edition of "The Rural Texan," the tornado destroyed many homes and two residents lost their lives. Residents of Happy experienced an outpouring of support from the surrounding area to address the immediate needs of shelter, support, and clean-up of the estimated 7,000 cubic yards of debris. Staff from the Office of Rural Community Affairs (ORCA) and the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) arrived after the immediate clean-up efforts to offer further assistance to the city and the residents in coping with the after effects of the disaster.



Happy, TX: The Reyes family with their new manufactured housing unit.

The city of Happy received a \$350,000 Disaster Relief grant from ORCA with the primary goal being the replacement of destroyed homes caused by the tornado. Using these funds, the city assisted five residents and their families in replacing their housing units.

With help from the disaster relief grant, the Reyes family replaced their home after the tornado completely destroyed it. Mr. and Mrs. Reyes are extremely grateful for the assistance. Their family is now able to remain in Happy.

The second beneficiary, the Wall family, lost the home they had been remodeling. This family of two was also able to replace their destroyed home with a new home.

ORCA's Disaster Relief program proved to be a great success and provided a tremendous benefit to both the residents and the city as a whole.

Leadership: Key to Rural Success

By Stacy Hoefling, ORCA

Created by the 77th Legislature in 2001, ORCA was charged with the task of "developing programs to improve the leadership capacity of rural community leaders." This mandate marks the first time the state recognized the key role that leadership plays in the success of rural Texas and ORCA is proud to have been handed this responsibility.

ORCA understands that leadership is crucial for the survival of a community, particularly those in rural areas where there is often a lack of enough capital and human resources to address local issues. For a community to maintain its own sustained prosperity, it must be able to foster local leaders who are intimately familiar with the issues and concerns of the community. Rural Texas needs more leaders who are visionaries with the ability to lead by example and guide their community to long-term viability.

The first step in fulfilling ORCA's leadership mission was to learn about existing leadership programs available, accessible, and relevant to rural Texans. Research has shown that many leadership programs exist in Texas, which deliver a multitude of training on various skills. To consolidate this information, ORCA created a "Leadership Inventory" publication to serve as a reference tool for rural Texans seeking to develop their leadership skills. A continuing work in progress, this publication will be constantly updated to include new programs. The Inventory can be found on the ORCA website under "Publications."

After reviewing the many leadership programs already available, the decision was made not to directly provide leadership training programs as ORCA does not intend to duplicate services. Rather, ORCA looks to build partnerships and collaborations with existing programs to discover ways to link opportunities to better serve rural Texans.

The next step towards achieving ORCA's leadership goal was to invite representatives from leadership programs listed in the Inventory to come together and discuss partnerships and collaborations. At this meeting, ORCA learned what core leadership skills each program representative felt was important for the success of a rural community leader. A listing of skills was identified and each program was asked to cross-reference their training modules with this skill listing. This information will be used to identify "gaps"; skills which are necessary but are not being delivered.

Working groups will be developed to draft curriculum for those identified skills. Any new curriculum created by the groups will be available to all interested organizations, programs, and communities at no charge. The goal is to identify a recommended set of training modules for rural citizens.

ORCA is seeking additional input on the information. If you know of a leadership program that you feel should be listed, contact ORCA to be considered for addition to the Inventory.

Want to E-mail ORCA?

To e-mail a member of the ORCA staff, address the message to the staff member's first initial and full last name@orca.state.tx.us.

For example, to e-mail Linda Trinh use ltrinh@orca.state.tx.us.

Just want to send comments to the agency in general? Send your e-mail to orca@orca.state.tx.us.



Learning Opportunities

Grant Writing, Training Workshops

Grantmanship Center - Workshops cover all aspects of searching for grants, writing grant proposals, and negotiating with funding sources. For the information about the training scheduled in Texas, call Grantmanship Center at 213-482-9860 or visit www.tgci.com.

The Texas Historical Commission - This agency offers seminars that covers all aspect of fund raising, including where to find funding, how to approach foundations and how to write convincing proposals. For more information, contact Mae Zapata at 512-463-6092 or visit www.thc.state.tx.us.

The Texas Historical Commission - This agency offers seminars that covers all aspect of fund raising, including where to find funding, how to approach foundations and how to write convincing proposals. For more information, contact Mae Zapata at 512-463-6092 or visit www.thc.state.tx.us.

Grantwriters.com - Provides professional consulting, materials and training for grant and proposal writing. Packed with free information and links to major funding sources. For more information visit www.grantwriters.com.

Nonprofit Resource Center of Texas - Workshops on proposal writing, special events, legal and accounting issues, management issues, program evaluation, board development, and many other topics. For more information on dates and registration, call 210-227-4333 or visit www.nprc.com.

North Texas Regional Library System - Workshops on policy writing. For more information, contact Amanda Barrera at 800-856-3050 or visit www.ntrls.org.

A Circle of Ten, Inc. - Training sessions and workshops on the topics of Network for Collaboration, the Process for Collaboration, and the Next Step. For more information about the training schedules, call 903-541-0013 or visit www.circleof10.org.

Texas Economic Development Council: Economic Development Finance 101 - The first in a four part series that explores the skills that are essential to be successful at stimulating economic development. For more details and registration, call 512-480-8432 or visit www.texasedc.org.

Texas Center for Service Learning: Ambassador Workshops - Improve student achievement through service-learning, the thoughtful integration of community service with powerful academic learning. Assisting students, teachers,

administrators and communities in Texas and the Southwest Region with training, technical assistance and resources to develop and strengthen service-learning. For dates and more information, call 915-675-8600 or visit www.esc14.net.

Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC): Asset Management Training - Includes asset-based budgets, capital planning, financial planning, and site management to take place throughout the year at locations across the nation. For information, contact your local LISC office or call Maria Gutierrez at 212-455-9319.

ACC Center for Community: Strengthening Boards of Directors by Clarifying Roles, Responsibilities & Expectations - Explore the legal duties, responsibilities and roles of the Boards of Directors, Board members, the Chief Professional and Volunteer Officers through the prism of leadership, credibility and role delineation. For more information and registration, visit <http://www2.austinctc.edu/npocurrentsession.html> or call 512-223-7076.

Continuing Education Opportunities

Texas Department of Health - The Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Education Training manual is now available on-line. It specifically targets those who do not have access to institutions of higher learning but who possess the knowledge, skills, resources and dedication to provide sound EMS education and training in areas where it would otherwise be unavailable. For more information, call 512-458-7111 or visit www.tdh.state.tx.us.

Office of Leadership and Management Services - Offers workshops that develop and help people to perform at optimal levels is one of the most important roles of supervisors, managers, and leaders in libraries and information service agencies. For more information and registration, call 202-296-2296 visit www.arl.org.

South Plains Association of Governments: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid: Back-to-School Project - Seniors in the South Plains region are learning the advantages of going on-line. The regional organization, through school district partnerships, uses high school computer labs to teach seniors about the basics of operating a computer and how to access on-line Medicare/Medicaid programs, social security and private healthcare resources. For more information, call 806-762-8721 or visit www.spag.org.

Rural Outreach Program - This program involves both graduate and undergraduate nursing students in rural health projects with the goal of assisting students to understand and appreciate rural health care needs. For further information, contact, Sylvia Rawlings at 817-272-3527 or e-mail at rawlings@uta.edu.

School-to-Careers Opportunities Program - An approach to smoothing the transition from the classroom to the workplace. Every School-to-Careers Opportunities program contains three core elements known as School-Based Learning, Work-Based Learning and Connecting Activities. For more information, call 512-463-2236 or visit www.twc.state.tx.us.

Texas Education Coordinating Board: TASP - The Texas Academic Skills Program is an instructional program designed to ensure that students attending public institutions of higher learning in Texas and students entering educator preparation programs in Texas have the academic skills necessary to perform effectively in college-level work. For more information, call 512-427-6101 or visit www.tasp.nesinc.com.

Conferences, Events Around Texas

Presidential Environmental Youth Awards - This program recognizes young people across America for projects, which demonstrate their commitment to the environment. Young people in all 50 states and the US territories are invited to participate in the program. Nominations due July 31. For more information, call 202-260-2090 or visit www.epa.gov.

North and East Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association Conference - The conference will take place June 8-11, 2003 at the Hilton Hotel/Waco Convention Center. For more information, call McLennan County Commissioner Ray Meadow's office at 254-757-5064, ask for Ann Forrest.

South Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association Conference - The conference will take place July 8-12, 2003 at the La Posada Hotel and Suites in Laredo. For more information, call Travis County Commissioner Margaret Gomez's office at 512-854-8444, ask for Joe Vela.

Electronic and Networked Information and Databases: Making Choices, Part One and Two - This is a satellite teleconference that will be taking place at various locations throughout the state. For dates and locations, call 512-328-1518 or visit www.txla.org.

For more rural Texas events, check the calendar on ORCA's website!

CDBG Provides Basic Human Needs, Sanitary Infrastructure to Small Rural Communities

ORCA's Community Development Unit receives funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that come to Texas as Community Block Development Grant monies.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is comprised of two distinct programs:

- (1) Entitlement Program: Administered directly by HUD, which provides formula-allocated funding to metropolitan cities and to qualified urban counties.
- (2) Nonentitlement or States and Small Cities Program: Provides federal fund directly to states which, in turn, provide funds on a competitive and as-needed basis to small, non-metropolitan cities

with populations less than 50,000 and to counties with 200,000 population that are not eligible for entitlement status. ORCA's Texas Community Development Program (TCDP) administers the Texas "Nonentitlement" CDBG program for non-metropolitan cities and counties throughout the State.

TCDP is the largest in the nation, serving approximately 1,031 eligible rural communities, 247 rural counties, and providing services to over 375,000 beneficiaries each year.

Of the 1,031 cities eligible for TCDP funds, 775 have a population of less than 3,000 and 465 have a population of less than 1,000. The demographics and rural characteristics of Texas have shaped a program that focuses on providing basic human needs, such as sanitary infrastructure to small rural communities in outlying areas. Eligible activities for program funding include sanitary sewer systems, clean drinking water, disaster relief and urgent need projects, housing, drainage and flood control, passable streets, economic development, community centers, and other related activities.

ORCA oversees the application process, administration, and monitors eight Texas Community Development Program funding categories. (Refer to the Summer 2002 edition of "The Rural Texan" or the ORCA website for a complete listing of the program funding categories.)

For more information contact, ORCA.



Funding Opportunities

Funding Available for Economic Development

Rural Business Opportunity Grants - These grants are available to pay costs of providing economic planning for rural communities, technical assistance for rural businesses, or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials. Additional information and copies of the regulations and forms can be obtained by contacting any USDA Rural Development State Office or visit www.rurdev.usda.gov.

United States Department of Agriculture: Rural Housing Service Guaranteed Rental Housing Program - These loans are for developments of multi-family housing facilities in rural areas of the United States. Application deadline: May 16, 2003 or until funds are exhausted. For further information, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Rural Economic Development Loans - Provides zero-interest loans to electric and telephone utilities financed by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the US Department of Agriculture, to promote sustainable rural economic development and job creation projects. For further information on this program, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Rural Rental Housing Program - Rural Rental Housing Loans are direct, competitive mortgage loans made to provide affordable multifamily rental housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income families; the elderly; and persons with disabilities. For further information, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Texas Department of Transportation: Landscape Cost Sharing Program - This program was created to allow private businesses, civic organizations, and local governments an opportunity to support the landscape and aesthetic improvement of the state highway system by sharing the project development, establishment, and maintenance cost of landscaping the state highway system. For more information, call 512-832-7000 or visit www.dot.state.tx.us.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: Trail Improvement Grants - Eligible projects include construction of new recreation trails on public or private lands, trail restoration or rehabilitation, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) upgrades, acquisition of property, maintenance of existing trails, environmental mitigation, and the development of trail-side and trail-head facilities. Contact Andy Goldbloom at 512-912-7128 or andygoldbloom@tpwd.state.tx.us or download the application and guidelines at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/grants/trails.

Financial Aid Opportunities for Education

Texas Rural Communities, Inc. (TRC) - Announces the availability of Federal Stafford Student Loans for rural residents through TRC. For more information on the availability of student loans through TRC, call Sandra Tenorio, Executive Director, at 800-787-2589.

Student Conservation Association - Opportunities for high school students ages 15-19 and people 18 years of age and older for an internship program. This program is for students interested in having one of more than 2,000 expense-paid internships. Detailed information can be found in the SCA website at www.sca-inc.org. For more information, contact, Ashley Hansen at 703-524-2441 or e-mail ashley@sca-inc.org.

United States Department of Education: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education - Two grant programs that are designed to address the unique needs of rural school districts-the Small, Rural School Achievement Program and the Rural and Low-Income School Program. For further information, contact Mr. Charles Lovett, Group Leader at 202-401-0039.

Ford Foundation Calls for Nominees for Community Leadership Award - The Ford Foundation has put out a call for nominations for its "Leadership for a Changing World" awards. Awardees receive \$130,000 over a two-year period to support their programs and explore new learning opportunities. For more information, call 202-777-7560 or visit www.leadershipforchange.org.

Rural Utilities Services: Distance Learning/Telemedicine Grants - \$200 million in loans; \$17 million in grants; and \$10 million in grants paired with \$100 million in loans. Grants help support efforts by rural organizations to use the Internet and other technology to improve education and health services. For more information contact, Marilyn Morgan at 202-720-0413 or visit www.usda.gov.

Funds Available for Health Research, Services

National Institutes of Health: Research Infrastructure Program - A central goal of this program is to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in mind-body and health research while providing essential and cost-effective core services in support of the development, conduct, and translation into practice of mind-body and health research based in centers or comparable administrative units. For more information contact Ronald P. Abeles, Office of Behavioral & Social Research, Office of the Director, NIH, e-mail: abeles@nih.gov or call 301-496-7859. See the full announcement at: <http://grants.nih.gov>.

National Institutes of Health: Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) - AREA grants will support small-scale, new or ongoing health-related meritorious research projects, including pilot research projects and feasibility studies; development, testing, and refinement of research techniques; secondary analysis of available data sets; and similar discrete research projects that demonstrate research capability. For more information on eligibility, contact Marie A. Willett, NIH AREA Coordinator at 301-435-2689 or e-mail: willettm@od.nih.gov or visit www.grants.nih.gov.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: Strengthening Treatment Access and Retention - To implement new clinical and administrative practices designed to improve client access to and retention in substance abuse treatment centers. For more information contact Suzanne Cable, Division of Services Improvement, CSAT/SAMHSA, 301-443-9713 or e-mail scable@samhsa.gov.

More Funding Possibilities

Rural Broadband Loan and Loan Guarantee Program - For FY 2003, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made available \$1.4 billion in loans and loan guarantees to provide broadband services in rural communities. These loans will facilitate deployment of new and innovative technologies to provide two-way data transmission of 200 kbps or more, in communities with populations up to 20,000. For information visit www.rurdev.usda.gov.

National Institutes of Health: Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) - AREA grants will support small-scale, new or ongoing health-related meritorious research projects, including pilot research projects and feasibility studies; development, testing, and refinement of research techniques; secondary analysis of available data sets; and similar discrete research projects that demonstrate research capability. For more information on eligibility, contact Marie A. Willett, NIH AREA Coordinator at 301-435-2689 or e-mail: willettm@od.nih.gov or visit www.grants.nih.gov.

United States Department of Energy: The National Energy Technology Laboratory - Financial assistance for a "Power Plant Improvement Initiative." The technologies to be developed under this program will be vital to the role that coals and other solid fuels will play on the world power production scene. Currently, there is no application deadline. For more information, contact Ann C. Zysk at 412-386-6600.

ORCA Field Office Provides Options for Local Business

By Jill McFarren, ORCA

In 1997, Bryant Rayngay moved from Vermont to O'Donnell, a small northwest Texas community that straddles Lynn and Dawson counties. With a \$500 grant from West Texas Resource Conservation and Development, Rayngay started Au Naturel, a company that specializes in making products that are 100 percent organic cotton, such as bath towels, robes, sheets, comforters, and various custom made items.

Today, the company employs 10 O'Donnell residents who work to keep up with orders from clients that include fashion designer Giorgio Armani, a major resort in the Caribbean, and Frank Sinatra Jr. To ensure his customers receive consistent, high quality cotton, all employees are trained by Mr. Rayngay or other individuals in the cotton mill processing systems.

Rayngay plans to expand his business in the very near future and when he does, he'll look to Alvino Lopez, ORCA's Lubbock field office representative, to help him identify resources and opportunities available to him, such as those offered by the Texas Capital Fund and other state and federal programs.

"I enjoy working with rural communities, and small business owners like Rayngay," says Lopez. "We'll work together to explore ways to support increasing the number of employees, locate options for land acquisition, infrastructure facilities, and capital improvements to the existing facility."

According to Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, MS, this is a good example of how rural Texans should use the rural-focused agency. "ORCA was created specifically to assist rural Texans who are looking to enhance their quality of life," Tessen said. "ORCA is here to help rural Texans identify state resources that might help them accomplish their goals. We're the 'door to state government' for rural Texans."

Rayngay chose to build his company in O'Donnell because of the number of organic cotton growers in the area and the community's proximity to a major highway and Lubbock's airport, which provide direct access to distribution systems.



ORCA's Program Activities

Inter-Agency Partnership Created

In April 2002, members of Texas' first-ever Inter-Agency Work Group met to discuss the state's programs and services available to rural Texans. At the time, the group consisted of the heads of 12 state agencies. Since then, the group has expanded to include an additional 13 state agencies who also share the mutual goal of streamlining information about and access to state programs, services and activities for rural Texas. This dedication to serving the state's 3.2 million rural citizens is bringing new thoughts and perspectives to the program development and implementation tables.

Inter-Agency Rural Working Group was developed to:

- Discuss and coordinate rural programs and services offered through the state;
- Create a total-service inter-agency partnership for meeting the needs of rural Texas; and
- Generate a new avenue for awareness of rural issues and opportunities to learn about other rural programs and services.

The heads of each state agency listed below are required to meet at least once a year, per House Bill 7 (77):

- Comptroller of Public Accounts
- Public Utility Commission
- Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board
- Texas Agriculture Extension Service
- Texas Dept. of Agriculture
- Texas Dept. of Health
- Texas Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs
- Texas Dept. of Human Services
- Texas Dept. of Transportation
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.
- Texas Water Development Board

Other agencies not listed in HB 7 in the Inter-Agency Working Group and who also participate include:

- Office of the Governor
- Office of the Lt. Governor
- Office of the Speaker
- Texas Aerospace Commission
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Dept. of Economic Development
- Texas Dept. of Insurance
- Texas Dept. of Mental Health and Retardation
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Railroad Commission
- Texas Workforce Commission

Directory of State Agency Programs, Services now Available

Rural Texans now have a user-friendly publication to help them navigate state programs, services, and resources. ORCA developed the "Directory of State Agency Programs and Services" to assist rural citizens and communities with accessing existing state resources. The directory is a coordinated, collaborative effort between ORCA and various state agencies.

The directory is organized by categories designed to assist website visitors in narrowing their search. Each category includes a listing of programs offered by various agencies.

Categories include:

Agriculture/Ranching	Leadership Training	Training
Community Development	Natural Resources/Environmental	Transportation
Cultural	Public Education	Water Resources
Economic Development	Public Utilities	Wildlife
Health Care and Community Services	Recreation	Workforce
Higher Education	Telecommunication	

The directory is available on ORCA's website simply click on "Directory of State Agency Programs and Services." Hard copies of the document are also available from ORCA.

Communities Pilot Project Identifies Solutions, Resources

The Communities Pilot Project is a technical assistance project that assist communities in identifying solutions and non-financial resources to address local issues; helps community leaders address needs and issues identified in their needs assessment or strategic plans; or if a community has not developed a needs assessment, the project may speed up the needs assessment process by going directly to the implementation and solution phase of community assistance.

Communities participating in the pilot project:

County	City
Brooks	Falfurrias
Cochran	Morton
Jack	Jacksboro
Newton	Newton
Pecos	Iraan
Robertson	Hearne

ORCA will be evaluating the success of the project soon to determine if this approach to community assistance is effective. For more information on the Communities Pilot Project, contact ORCA.

Rural Communities Awarded HIF Grants

ORCA awarded \$2.3 million Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant awards to six rural communities for single-family housing development infrastructure projects in January 2003. The communities were selected through an annual competition from the agency's HIF grant, which provides for infrastructure such as water, sewer, street and drainage systems in projects associated with the development of affordable single-family or multifamily housing for low- to moderate-income Texans.

All grant recipients were presented a ceremonial check on February 5 at an awards ceremony held at the Travis Building in Austin.

Awardees included:

City	County	Grant Amount
Bastrop	Bastrop	\$400,000
Bay City	Matagorda	\$400,000
Boerne	Kendall	\$306,000
Brenham	Washington	\$400,000
Greenville	Hunt	\$400,000
Hondo	Medina	\$400,000

ORCA Facts

Overview

ORCA was created in 2001 by the 77th Texas Legislature to serve as a focal agency for the state's community development, economic development, and healthcare programs that target the rural areas of Texas. ORCA encompasses five program and services units: Community Development; Outreach and Training Services; Program Compliance and Audit; Rural Health; and Research, Policy, and Planning.

Objective

Serve as a focal agency for the state's health, economic development, and community development programs targeting rural Texas communities.

Goal

To "assure a continuing focus on rural issues, monitor governmental actions affecting rural Texas, research problems, and recommend solutions, and coordinate rural programs among state agencies."

Mission Statement

To assist rural Texans who seek to enhance their quality of life by facilitating, with integrity, the use of the resources of our state so that sustained economic growth will enrich the rural Texas experience for the benefit of all.

For more information, visit ORCA's website.

Rural Texas Students to Create ORCA Logo

Students attending any rural Texas high school, community college or university are invited to submit logo design(s) for consideration and selection for adaptation and use by ORCA. The student submitting the selected logo will be awarded a \$500 scholarship. All logos ideas must be submitted to ORCA no later than July 31, 2003. For more information, contact ORCA or visit the ORCA website for complete details.

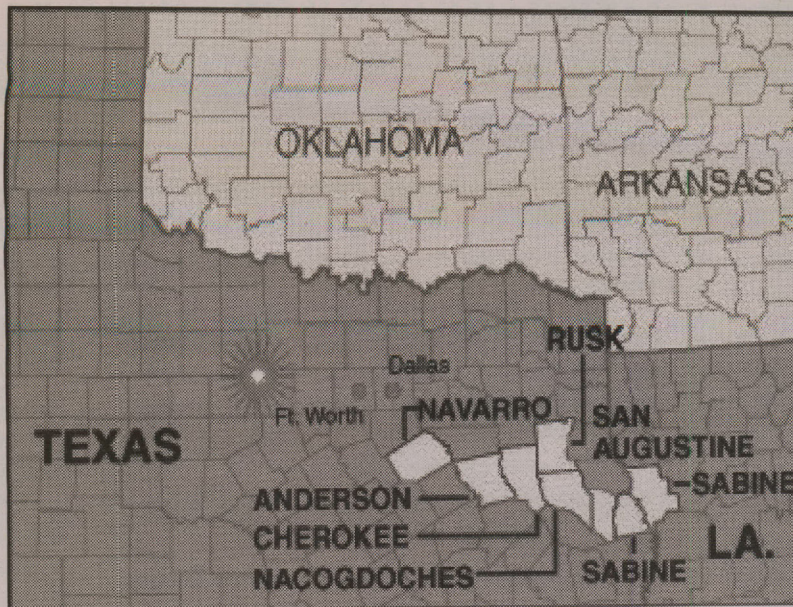
Shuttle (continued from page 1)

reached Earth in a swath of ground more than 100 miles long, some in the town of Nacogdoches in east Texas—*one* landed near a high school, another went through the roof of a dentist's office. Officials, including military units, sectioned the fragments off until federal personnel could gather them up. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) asked residents of east Texas and bordering areas to stay clear of any possible wreckage. One reason was the possibility of toxic gases from propulsion and power unit fuels; they wanted only the experts to move debris.

Across Nacogdoches and the surrounding region of Pine Forest, residents found chunks of debris. A small tank rested on a runway. A steel rod with silver bolts remained roped off behind yellow police tape in a yard and a piece of metal rested in a bank parking lot.

"Our community immediately responded with volunteers at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), food, shelter for the workers and supplies were donated such as pillows and blankets for the workers," recounted Nacogdoches County Judge Sue Kennedy. "The media were given great hospitality. Our citizens guarded shuttle material, directed recovery workers, provided communications, global positioning system (GPS) assistance, provided housing for some volunteers, encouragement to the hundreds of workers, and worked patiently with the recovery workers."

When asked if a disaster plan was implemented during this tragic event, Judge Kennedy responded, "We had just completed the draft of our Hazard Mitigation Plan. The process of developing the plan ended up being more valuable than the plan itself. All of



Map of where shuttle debris was found in Texas.

the people involved in developing the plan had leadership roles in the shuttle recovery. We had already established a trusting, working relationship."

"We knew everyone's strengths, weaknesses, responsibilities, authorities and statutory roles. Therefore, we began working immediately; we didn't have to work through any responsibility, trust, or authority issues," added Judge Kennedy. "As part of our plan, we had established a database on Nacogdoches at Stephen F. Austin State University. This became a critical part of the recovery process."

Just east of Nacogdoches County, an intact, charred helmet and astronaut's patch, a metal piece the size of a pickup truck, and a 5- to 6-foot-long object were a few of the things collected in San Augustine County.

San Augustine County Judge Wayne Holt commented, "The hardest part was accommodating the amount of people that came. All the churches and youth people came together to provide lodging and food for the visitors, but we just didn't have facilities to accommodate that amount of people that came pouring in. Overall, the community took it all in stride."

In Cherokee County, west of San Augustine and Nacogdoches Counties, search crews found over 300 pieces of debris.

"A short time after we were notified of the crash, we had volunteer sheriffs and fire fighters pouring in. Our Emergency Management Coordinator, Jack White, did a fantastic job coordinating the disaster efforts," recalled Cherokee County Judge Chris Davis. "The voluntary fire department was called in at 7 am one morning and by 8:30 am we already had 130 people briefed and out collecting debris. The community really came together to help. They called it when they found debris and did all they could."

Reported debris rested in the Piney Woods timber region of east Texas, which is rugged and densely wooded in most places. The Texas Forest Service helped local officials plot debris locations on a map. Additional counties with recovered shuttle debris included: Anderson, Navarro, Rusk, and Sabine.

"Sadly we are going to be gathering and finding debris for many years to come because Cherokee County is such a heavily wooded area," said Judge Davis. On a lighter note, Judge Davis added, "A new reservoir is being built and the original name was changed after a letter to the editor was printed in the our local newspaper. The community voted on naming it the Columbia reservoir in memorial of the Columbia shuttle."

Rural Summit (continued from page 1)

Group 3: Agriculture and Natural Resources, for example: Animal health, renewable fuels, water, oil/gas, environmental regulations, parks/wildlife

Group 4: County and Community Affairs, Border Issues, for example: EMS, Volunteer Fire Departments, 911, colonias

Group 5: Economic Development, Taxes, and Housing, for example: Workforce, housing, community affairs, business development

Group 6: Transportation, Utilities, and Communications, for example: Transportation, utility services, telecommunications, broadband

In the end, common concerns and solutions surfaced among all of the groups, highlighting the intertwining of the individual interest pieces that comprise the rural puzzle.

All groups identified funding ("resources") as one solution to some or all of their issues, while four of the six groups identified unfunded mandates as a debilitating factor, and suggested the elimination of such past and future legislation.

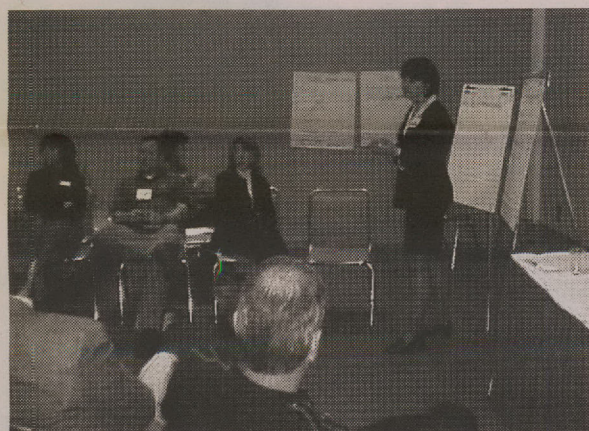
Five groups requested encouragement to develop partnerships, coops, collaborations, etc. with an eye on sharing and maximizing available resources.

Five groups also identified the need for the elimination of complexities by integrating the use of "common sense" and reducing grant reporting redundancies, suggesting a standardization and simplification of bureaucratic processes.

Four groups noted the need for centralization, coordination and distribution of information. Two groups suggested that ORCA be responsible for these activities. Three groups suggested increases in training and technical assistance opportunities, programs, and services.

The event, sponsored by the East Texas Area Health Education Center, Rural Community Health System of Texas, South Plains Community Action Association, Texas Workforce Commission, USDA Rural Development and the Texas Horsemen's Partnership, drew over 150 participants from across the state.

A compilation of the policy suggestions designed to address key rural issues identified by attendees will be posted to the agency's website this summer.



Beth Eby, Director of the Frank M. Tejeda Center for Excellence in Environmental Operations, facilitates a discussion in the County and Communities Affairs, Border Issues breakout session.

Capital Fund Grants Available for Rural Communities

About \$12.5 million is awarded through the Texas Capital Fund each year to small Texas cities and counties for Infrastructure, Real Estate, and Main Street Development.

For more information about the Texas Capital Fund Program, call 1-877-428-7848 or visit www.agr.state.tx.us.

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If you are currently a subscriber, please note any changes to your contact information on this form. Please feel free to use this form to be added to our mailing list. Simply give us the information below, cut this portion of the page off the newsletter, and mail in a stamped envelope to: Office of Rural Community Affairs, P.O. Box 12877, Austin, TX 78711

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ORCA Establishes New Local Business Development Programs

In 2002, ORCA began designing two new opportunities to add to the agency's list of development programs. The latest additions to ORCA's administration are the Small Business Loan Program and the Microenterprise Loan Program. The purpose of both programs is to encourage local job creation and retention efforts benefiting low- and moderate-income persons in rural communities.

The Small Business Loan Program is a \$1 million initiative that offers grants to eligible cities and counties supporting for-profit businesses committing to creating or retaining jobs at a \$25,000 maximum cost per job through loans resulting from a gap financing need.

The Microenterprise Loan Program is a \$500,000 initiative that provides grants to eligible cities and counties through nonprofit organizations (economic development corporations, community development corporations, etc.) for the purpose of establishing local loan programs that directly assist for-profit businesses committed to creating or retaining jobs at a \$25,000 maximum cost per job.

Both programs provide between \$50,000-\$100,000 per contract award for:

- Working capital, i.e.:
- Purchase of raw materials
- Inventory
- Rent
- Utilities
- Salaries
- Other operations needs
- Machinery and equipment (cars and trucks considered rolling stock are not eligible use of funds)
- Real estate improvements

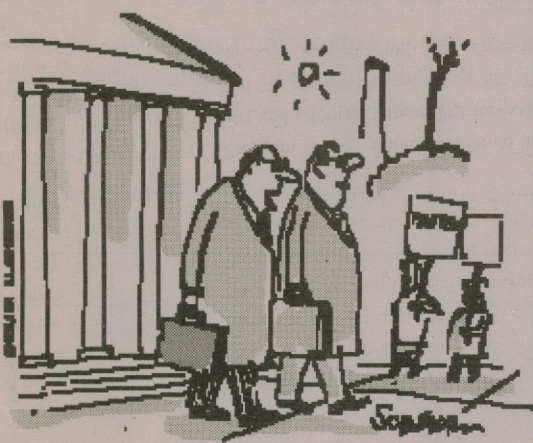
Neither program may be used for:

- Debt service
- Refinancing
- Payment of salaries of the business principals

Both programs are funded under the state Community Development Block Grant Program through the use of income generated from the re-payment of loans and lease payments from economic development projects.

Applications for these programs will be available in late 2003. For more information, contact ORCA.

RWHC Eye On Health



"You realize if bureaucrats become cooperative we need a new scapegoat."

Cartoon by Tim Size, Executive Director, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative. Reprinted with permission.

Traumatic Brain Injury Training Rolls Out with Help from ORCA

By Al Lewis, ORCA

ORCA worked with Panhandle Emergency Medical Services to roll out the first of its kind education program targeted at training the management of traumatic brain injury in the prehospital setting in the state of Texas.

Texas' first program took place in Amarillo with an instructor course on February 28, 2003. Hosted locally by the Northwest Texas Healthcare Systems and Panhandle Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Eric Lynn, NREMT-P, coordinated the course. This first instructor course trained over 40 Pre-hospital Management of Traumatic Brain Injury Instructors from all over Texas.

"I have been trying to get this program off the ground for almost two years," noted Lynn. "Through communication with the Brain Trauma Foundation, I was led to Kathy Griffis-Bailey from the Texas Department of Health's Traumatic Brain Injury Project, and Al Lewis from ORCA and now the training has become a reality."

Lynn first attended a course in New Mexico on traumatic brain injuries and realized that with such a high incidence of head injuries in the Panhandle region, he thought it would be great to educate all the regional EMS and hospitals in the area.

"The Brain Trauma Foundation (BTF) is extremely pleased to be able to bring its prehospital management of traumatic brain injury program to Texas this year," stated Pamela Drexel,

Executive Director of Brain Trauma Foundation in New York. "I'm particularly happy to be working with a group such as ORCA because I believe our program is of the greatest value in rural communities where transport times are long, and those minutes and hours so critical to the TBI patient are in the hands of the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)."

The instructor course will also be offered in November as a pre-conference option to the 2003 Texas EMS Conference in San Antonio. Meanwhile, BTF will be working with ORCA to present the training at several of the critical access hospitals around the state. ORCA is also working to coordinate at least 8 more instructor courses throughout Texas by the end of 2003.

Funded by a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, BTF offers an eight-hour course for instructors taught by a member of its national faculty. The materials and tools given to the participants enable them to teach a 4-hour course to their providers. Offered around the nation ten states at a time, this program assists emergency medical personnel in the assessment, treatment and transport of critically head-injured patients. More information may be found on its website, www.braintrauma.org.

For information on hosting a TBI instructor course, contact ORCA.

New Rules Open Doors to Foreign Doctors Trained in US

New rules announced recently by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Texas Department of Health (TDH) help rural and other communities suffering from a shortage of health care providers to request waivers of a return-home requirement for foreign physicians who trained in the United States. These rules may offer foreign physicians expanded opportunities to serve in shortage areas in Texas.

Foreign physicians can fill two shortage types. One is designated by geographic areas, facilities, or populations termed health professional shortage area. The other type is a medically underserved area/population.

Foreign physicians who enter the US under the "J" program for graduate medical education or training must return to their foreign residence for two years after their program's completion. In certain circumstances, the regulations permit physicians to apply for a waiver of the two-year foreign residence requirement if they are willing to work in a health professional shortage area or medically underserved area/population.

Two options now exist in Texas to waive the two-year foreign residency requirement: the Human Services Department program and the Conrad/State 30 program.

In December 2002, the Human Services Department announced the sponsorship of J-1 waivers for foreign physicians to expand access to health care in shortage areas. The Department of

Health and Human Services will serve as an "interested government agency," replacing the Department of Agriculture, which withdrew its J-1 waiver program in March 2002.

Under the Human Services Department interim regulations:

- Eligibility is limited to primary care physicians and general psychiatrists.
- Sponsor facility must establish it recruited actively and in good faith for US physicians.
- Sponsor facility must establish it has been unable to recruit a US physician after recruiting efforts made in good faith.
- Physician can have no other waiver application pending.
- Physician must enter into an employment agreement meeting established criteria.

Qualified employers and physicians who intend to file a J-1 waiver application should apply as early as possible. The prospective employer and physician need to identify, assemble and submit relevant supporting documents.

Each physician continues to be subject to all Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services requirements to qualify for an H-1B visa (to work in the US) under the three-year employment contract submitted with the waiver application. For more information, contact Connie Berry, TDH at 512-458-7111.

Adapted from an article by James D. Prappas and Charles L. Carr in the *Houston Business Journal*.

Third annual National Small Cities Day June 20, 2003

Designed to celebrate the accomplishments and successes of America's small cities and towns. Sponsored by the National League of Cities' Small Cities Council (SCC) and endorsed by the NLC Board of Directors.

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