



Special Topics for Winter 2015

- A Word from the Director
- New Employees Hired for 4-H, FCS & ANR
- 2015 TX Community Futures Forum
- Child Care Providers Education
- Dinner Tonight Video Clips
- 30th Annual Vegetable Growers Conf.
- 2015 Backyard Basics
- Campfire Fun Camp
- EDEN App is Available
- Quick Stats & Facts
- Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events
- Contact Information

Jan.—Mar. 2015

TOTAL CONTACTS

254 educational sessions
38,772 attendees
2,424 Social Media posts
6,178 Social Media followers
19 Newsletters
10,896 Newsletter contacts
1,076 Volunteers assisted
3,425 Volunteer hours
5,246 Edu. Resources Used

Can you believe that with this first quarter newsletter we are nearly 1/4 into 2015. Time is flying by. But having said that we here in Fort Bend at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are excited about all the upcoming programs and proud to present this newsletter of recently past events.

Having said that, there is more to be excited about. First, we have with us four new employees to fill the shoes of those who have retired, advanced into other positions or enrolled in schools for advance degrees. Second, 2015 is a Texas Community Futures Forum year where Leadership Advisory Board Members and selected community leaders have come together to review, vote and rank issues that are important to Fort Bend County citizens in which AgriLife Extension might be able to help address. Both of these important happenings will be discussed within this document in greater detail.

Just a word about our programs! Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program through PVAMU are part of the Texas A&M System. The Texas A&M System, U.S.D.A., and the Fort Bend County Commissioners' Court cooperate as a team to provide support for Extension educational programming in an effort to reach all Fort Bend citizens. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

New Employees!



Angela Bosier, our previous Fort Bend County Program Assistant – 4-H, has accepted a transfer to the Fort Bend County Extension Agent – Urban Youth Development position effective October 1, 2014. The Fort Bend CEA-UYD position has been re-established and we are pleased to transfer Angela to this agent position. Angela holds a Master of Science Degree in Environmental and Chemical Sciences and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture both from McNeese State University. Angela's duties will include non-traditional 4-H and youth development programming with the more urbanized sectors of Fort Bend County.



Justin Saenz, Bee County Extension Assistant – 4-H, has accepted a transfer to the Fort Bend County Extension Agent – 4-H position effective November 1, 2014. Justin holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Service and Administration in Agriculture from Iowa State University. Justin was very active in student clubs and organizations while attending Iowa State. He was also very active in 4-H and FFA in Karnes County while growing up. Justin's duties will include the more traditional areas of 4-H and youth development, namely livestock, shooting sports, and wildlife, among others.

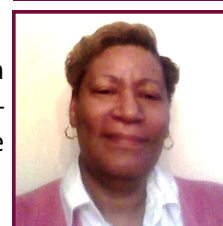
Leticia Hardy, Grimes Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences with CEP was hired on Dec. 15, 2014 to serve Fort Bend as our County Extension Agent in Family & Consumer Sciences (formally held by Sandra Fry who retired in 2013). Leticia holds a B.S degree in Family & Consumer Sciences and a M.S. degree in Ag & Human Sciences – specializing in Marriage & Family Therapy - both from Prairie View A&M University. Leticia previously worked as Cooperative Extension Agent in Family & Consumer Sciences for the Cooperative Extension Program of Prairie View A&M University. Leticia will focus primarily on health & wellness, financial matters, and parenting.



John Gordy, Brazoria County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, has accepted a transfer on February 2, 2014 to the Fort Bend County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources position. John holds a B.S. degree in Agronomy & Entomology from TAMU, and he has earned an M.S. degree in Entomology from LSU. In Brazoria County, John gained experience in row crops, small acreage/new landowner education and working with master volunteers. Prior to Extension work, John served 4 years as a science teacher in Pilot Point ISD, a scout for pests in field/row crops and a crop consultant intern in Oklahoma. John's duties will cover all aspects of agriculture in Fort Bend, but his main focus will be row crops, pest control, soils and water.



The fifth new hire is **Deanne Garrett**. Deanne will serve as our Better Living for Texans Program Assistant (part-time). This is a federally-funded position that will focus on limited-resource audiences in the area of foods & nutrition. Deanne recently retired from Health and Human Services where she specialized in social services and worked alongside welfare recipients.



Texas Community Futures Forum!

The Texas Community Futures Forum was held in Fort Bend County on March 27, 2014. The purpose of the public forum co-hosted by Fort Bend Leadership Advisory Board was to assist Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Agents in identifying the most critical issues affecting local citizens. AgriLife Extension has a rich history of providing educational programs that address the critical issues in the county, related to Agriculture &

Natural Resources, Families & Health, Youth Development, and Community Development program areas. In order to make sure that the programs being planned for the future are on target every four or five years this forum is conducted. There were a total of 39 present including 14 of 17 LAB members, 18 special guests, 7 agents and this CED. The assembly divided into 4 *small* groups according to the program areas listed above. Each person had an opportunity to list critical issues important to the community. Similar issues were combined and issue statements were formulated. The four small groups then voted to rank the importance of each statement. Afterwards, the assembly reconvened and reviewed the findings. Then everyone voted again—similar to a general election - to come up with an overall ranking of each issue for each program area. The findings are as follows according to level of importance:

Agriculture/Natural Resources & Horticulture

1. (26 votes) Water Conservation Education
2. (19 votes) Traditional Ag-related Programming
3. (16 votes) Food Preservation & Environmental Edu.
4. (15 votes) New Agribusiness Opportunities
5. (10 votes) Government Resources for Rural Communities

Family & Health

1. (42 votes) Support / Development of Mental Health Prgms.
2. (28 votes) Educational Programs Addressing Diversity
3. (15 votes) Health/Wellness Education for All

Youth Development

1. (20 votes) Summer/After-School Programs in Arts & Sciences
2. (18 votes) Health Education for Youth (fitness & nutrition)
3. (10 votes) Partnerships Between Youth & Adults (focusing on leadership, diversity and heritage)

Community Development

1. (40 votes) Infrastructure: Mobility; Mass Transit; Traffic Flow
2. (29 votes) – Water: Supply; Infrastructure; Usage
3. (21 votes) – Population Growth: Affordable Housing; Water Conservation; Urban Sprawl/Farmland Fragmentation; Language/Cultural Diversity

The above results have been recorded in AgriLife TexasData reporting system as required. And, in May will be presented to the Leadership Advisory Board for their review and to assist agents in formulating their 2016 Program Plans in each to the 4 program areas listed above to the best of our ability in addressing these issues.

Child Care Providers' Education!

Over 60% of children from birth through age six receive some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents that may not be well educated enough, nor caring & sensitive enough. It is essential for Extension to help educate a workforce to provide the high quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. On January 24 fifth-two providers attended a 4-H workshop to learn about Rainy-Day Activities, Learning Center Basics and Social/Emotional Development. Participants gained 4 clock hours each in addition to skills.



Dinner Tonight!

The percentage of the family food budget spent on away-from-home food has steadily increased since the 1970s and so has the amount of calories families consume. It is so easy when dining out to choose foods higher in calories and large portions. Our bodies are very efficient machines, using the calories we need and storing the overage. The problem is we tend to have too much overload that turns into overweight. And to make matters worst many people become overwhelmed when they think of menu planning and trying to prepare healthy, cost-effective meals for themselves and their families. So, for the third year in a row, Fort Bend

County has distributed at least one Dinner Tonight video clip to help any and all families eat better on a budget. Now there are more than 200 free video webcasts of easy-to-prepare recipes available at <http://healthyliving.tamu.edu> under the Dinner Tonight! tab. Recipe groups include chicken, beef, seafood, pork, turkey, vegetarian, salads, soups, sandwiches, casseroles and slow-cooker. Check them out!



30th Annual Vegetable Conference!



This year's program held on February 5, 2015 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds was another huge success because of partnerships, diversity, and technology. Participants included over 250 paid guests, 15 commercial exhibitors, 6 speakers and over 25 volunteers. This program was a 7-county partnership. We again added a program segment from our Food & Consumer Sciences division. Local FCS agent Dianne Gertson gave a real time *Dinner Tonight!* cooking demonstration during the lunch hour of

the program. Guests learned how to take their home-grown produce and prepare something tasty and healthy out of it. Moving ahead further in responding to the needs of our diverse audience, we developed break-out sessions where guests could choose the topics that best suited their needs. Even more impressive, as freezing weather limited speakers from traveling to the event, we were able to utilize our web conferencing software and internet capabilities to stream those presenters in real-time. As evaluation results are returned, we'll move forward with our final interpretation, but verbal comments from guests say that they all look forward to coming back next year!

Backyard Basics!

Upcoming Topics:

2/21/15 - Food Garden
3/14 - Preserving Tomatoes
3/26 - Pickling/Pressure Canning
4/11 - Freezing/Drying
5/22 - Salsa/Relish
6/20 - Gardening for the Wild
7/18 - EarthKind Landscaping
8/15 - The Fall Food Garden
9/12 - Composting Made Easy
10/23 - Jams & Jellies
11/14 - Grilling
12/5 - Fruits & Nuts

Are you interested in learning more about getting back to homegrown and home-made basics? The AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend, and Fort Bend Master Gardeners, are again offering Backyard Basics programs & workshops for the people of our region throughout 2015. These programs are in response to a growing statewide and national interest from consumers who are showing greater interest in returning to some of those basics more often associated with rural living – many of which have been forgotten or overlooked in the hustle and bustle of today's world. The programs are also a great way for people to reconnect with nature and to save money by recycling or conserving resources, including the water they use for their gardens and landscapes. By growing their own vegetables, people not only get enjoyment from the healthful outdoor activity of gardening, they also know where their food came from and how it was produced. Visit fortbend.agrilife.org to download the registration form.



Campfire Fun Camp!

This fun-filled camp was held on March 12, 2015 outside of the Education Center here at the AgriLife Extension office. Fifteen youth participants had a really great time learning about food safety, fire safety, and the timeless art of outdoor cooking. They had great fun learning how to make quick and easy meals cooked fresh over a campfire. They created, cooked and enjoyed breakfast burritos, mac & cheese, pigs in a blanket, monkey bread, huggies and s'mores. Pictures will never capture the enjoyment of sitting around a fire, telling stories and laughing while waiting to enjoy their own creations. This event was one of those life long experiences we remember forever. Some of us may call it cooking, but in reality we are teaching life-skills, and perhaps even survival skills under certain circumstances.



EDEN App!



Extension Disaster Education Network's new Emergency Preparedness & Recovery App is available. Be ready for any disaster or emergency with this Texas EDEN app. This emergency preparedness and recovery app provides simple information on how Texas individuals, families and businesses can prepare for and recover from a disaster such as a wild-fire, hurricane, severe weather and more.



Quick Stats & Facts About Fort Bend

For over 20 years, Fort Bend has been in the top 20 counties in the U.S. for economic excellence and population growth - by design and not by accident. Excellent schools, affordable housing, and extensive recreational facilities have attracted families with impressive demographic profiles. This results in a local employment base that provides companies with a diverse mix of professional, technical, skilled, and unskilled labor with the highest educational levels in the region. To learn more go to <http://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/>.

A Glimpse of Fort Bend County:

2013 Population: 643,408
College Educated: 40.40%
Median Household Income: \$81,528
Mean Household Income: \$108,994
Per Capita Income: \$37,152

Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events:

- April 14, Ag Symposium
- April 11, Food Preservation - Freezing/Drying
- April 22, Private Pesticide App. Training
- May 9, 4-H Rabbit Lecture
- May 1,2 - Big Time in D-9
- May 12, 19, 26 - Do Well Be Well w/Diabetes
- May 22, Food Preservation - Salsa/Relish
- June 2,9 - Do Well Be Well w/ Diabetes
- June 9,10—4-H Rockin Fishing Camp (virtual)
- June 20, Backyard Basics - Gardening for the Wild



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[www.http://fortbend.agrilife.org/](http://www.fortbend.agrilife.org/)

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Our Vision

To be the premier 21st Century outreach & continuing education organization in Texas responding to the needs of the people.