

# Making a Difference ....in Fort Bend County

2012—Volume 1, Issue 2—SPRING

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April1—June 30, 2012

## TOTAL CONTACTS

152 ed. sessions  
30,467 attendees  
777 site visits  
134 office visits  
631 phone calls  
1,538 emails  
164 websites  
540 mailouts

## The Beauty of Spring....Everything is Green!

The sun is shining, the air is warming and so is the soil! The gardens are starting the rehabilitation process from the cold weather, coming out of hibernation, hopefully! Many of you are twitching in the starting blocks, just waiting for the right time to get out there and do some pruning or start to turn the soil over in preparation for your spring vegetable garden! Well, now is the time to jump into spring gardening. We may have a few more days of cool, wet weather but we are itching to get out there and improve our landscapes and we can start the process now. There are so many tasks that need to be done in our gardens that often we don't know where to start. We had all winter to make our plan for our spring garden and now that it is time to implement we want to do everything at once.

First, we are noticing that the weeds are coming up in our landscape beds and our lawn. It is about time to fire up the lawn mower for the first time and knock those weeds back. It is always important to mow your grass at the appropriate height. This allows the grass to grow at a higher density which then provides soil surface shading. This restricts the germination of many annual grassy and broadleaf weeds. Proper mowing allows you to maintain this dense and healthy lawn which is the best method for weed control. St. Augustine grass should be mowed at a height between 2.5 and 4 inches, with the optimal height being 2.5 inches. The optimal mowing height for common Bermuda grass is 1.5 inches but is acceptable anywhere from 1 to 3 inches. These are the two most common turfs found in our landscapes, but you can find more information about turf management at <http://aggieturf.tamu.edu/>.



## Quilt Challenge....A Fun Project



Madison & Morgan Eben and Sheridan Reid participated in the Quilt Challenge Workshop in March in which this beautiful quilt was constructed. The quilt is currently on display at the AgriLife Extension office and will go to the 4-H Quilt Challenge competition this June at the Texas 4-H Roundup in Lubbock, Texas. Afterwards, the quilt will be raffled during the 4H Awards Banquet on August 4th and proceeds will go into a fund to support the Fort Bend County sewing project. WOW!

## 4-H and Youth Development—Club Statistics

4-H Clubs in Fort Bend County - 20  
Adult Leaders - 181  
Curr. Enrichment Participants - 2,750

4-H Club Members - 4334-H  
Youth Leaders - 77  
Spec. Interest & Short Term - 104,739

## Master Clothing Volunteer Training....Stitch Away

The Master Clothing Volunteer Training is set for June 18 - 22, 2012 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the AgriLife Extension office. Registration fee is \$100.00 and the price includes lunch and project materials. The registration deadline is May 15, 2012. A sewing supply list will be provided upon receipt of payment and prior to training. The class will be instructed by Sandy Fry, MS, CFCS, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent-Fort Bend County. The training will include teaching basic sewing techniques, serger sewing, fitting-tools & techniques and your completed take home projects.



## Fort Bend Master Gardeners Donate to 4-H.....\$



The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners donated \$3,000.00 to the Fort Bend 4-H Scholarship Fund. In the photo from left to right are Robin Vrana Vice Chairman of Adult Leaders & Debra Schochler, Treasurer of Adult Leaders. Giving the check are Jane Gray, Past President of the Master Gardeners & Jenny Grant, current President of the Master Gardeners along with Mr. Dwight Callis, CEA 4-H & Youth. Let us all thank the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners for their very generous donation to help our 4-H 'ers go to college!

## Pecan & Citrus Grafting Clinic....A Budding Future



The 2012 Annual Grafting Clinic took place on April 21, 2012 at John White 's Place in Fulshear, TX. Over 25 individuals attended the clinic and learned techniques to graft pecan and citrus trees. The demonstrated techniques included 4-Flap, Inlay Bark, t-budding, and patch-budding. Vincent Mannino (County Director ); Pete Pavlovsky, Fort Bend Pecan/Citrus Committee member; and Cliff Bergman, Fort Bend Pecan/Citrus Committee member demonstrated several grafting techniques. Contact Vincent Mannino, CED-FBC for more information.

## 2012 Fort Bend County Walk Across Texas

WAT, recognized as a "Best Practice Physical Activity " program by the TDSHS, is an 8-week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. WAT is designed to increase regular fitness and reduce obesity – leading to a decrease in heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure and depression. Thirty-one teams of eight people, school classes or individuals walk 830 miles across a map of Texas during the 8-weeks. Results indicated that the 248 participants could delay the onset of diabetes if they continue their physical activity routine. The Net Present Value for health care costs savings for females is \$3,333,787, for males - \$479,044, and for lost wages is > \$4,000,000.



# Master Naturalist Develops Rosenberg 's Seabourne Park

The **Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists** have teamed with City of Rosenberg to further develop Rosenberg 's Seabourne Creek Park by restoring 164 acres with forbs, trees and wildflowers, including little and big bluestem, Indian grass, aster, coneflowers, epazote, gayfeather, goldenrod, sprangletop and more. Modern farmers have begun to see the value in going native. Chapter Pres. Karl Baumgartner stressed the cooperative nature of the restoration project, with a tractor loaned by Gary Allred with Rosenberg Tractor pulling a no-till drill loaned by the Wildlife Habitat Federation, and the help of many of the group's members a 20 acre plot was established.

In addition, 150 trees were planted by church volunteers in an areas surrounding a 8-acre lake. The city of Rosenberg provided \$45,000 for the group 's tree-planting efforts. Master Naturalist Jim Butcher ordered and recently planted 100 osage orange, also known as Bois d 'Arc or Horse Apple to grow into a rectangular "natural corral " as the settlers of this region once did. The group recently started tracking the various bird species seen at the park. The list is up to 62, with species as varied as the stilt sandpiper, blue grosbeak and black-necked stilt joining loggerhead shrikes ( a pair is nesting in a newly planted live oak ), sparrows, mockingbirds and the like. Later this summer the First Annual Prairie Heritage Day will be held. Stay tuned for more information.

## 2012 Gulf Coast Vegetable Conference.....Helping Farmers Grow!

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Bend County Vegetable Conference was held on February 2, 2012 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds in Rosenberg. The Vegetable Conference disseminated the most recent and relevant information regarding vegetable production to the Gulf Coast Region. Vegetable production has become increasing popular in today 's culture. Individuals are more concerned about the origins of their produce while also trying to save money. Vegetable production is one area that addresses both of these concerns. The Gulf Coast Vegetable Committee slated a fantastic lineup of speakers to present topics relevant to vegetable production. These topics included Interpreting Soil Test, Crop Selection, Marketing Produce, Vegetable IPM and Pesticide Laws and Regulations. The Vegetable Conference was a resounding success with over 250 individuals in attendance. Commissioner Richard Morrison, Commissioner of Precinct 1 in Fort Bend County, gave a warm welcome to the attendees and stressed the importance of Agriculture in Fort Bend County. The attendees gained valuable information from the program and indicated they would use the information to improve their vegetable production. Standing in as horticulturist was Vincent Mannino, County Extension Director.



## Child Care Conferences....Helping Caregivers Succeed

2012 Fort Bend County Child Care Provider Conferences - 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 AgriLife Extension to help educate a workforce to provide the high quality child care that children need to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. In 2012, more than 400 providers that care for >3000 children through 56 centers gained nearly 3000 clock hours by attending full-day workshops to gain needed skills.



## Beef Cattle Production

The volatility of the 2012 cattle and hay markets indicated a need for educational programs relating to livestock production, improved pastures, soil fertility, and small grains for grazing. AgriLife Extension sought to increase the knowledge and skills of producers through two commercial heifer clinics & sales, two TV news reports on drought management, two articles on the impact of drought on local producers, and a drought management seminar where results indicated a 100% approval of the subject matter with regards to timeliness and relevance.



## **Texas AgriLife Extension Service**

### **Fort Bend County**

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### **Our Vision**

*To be the premier 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century outreach and  
continuing education  
organization in Texas  
responding to the  
needs of the people.*

Educational programs, provided by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, in conjunction with Fort Bend County Commissioners' Court in this second quarter of 2012, are in direct response to the needs of our clientele. Despite the size of the audience or subject matter interest, Extension's vision as an outreach organization focuses on attitude, skills and/or knowledge gained to improve the lives of our Fort Bend County citizens, businesses and communities across this county and this great state. We are pleased to provide you with this edition of *Educating Fort Bend County* as a snapshot review of our educational activities here in Fort Bend.

## **Needville Youth Fair \* April 15-22, 2012**

Come and show your support at the Needville Youth Fair held at the Fairgrounds in Needville, Texas. There will be a parade on Saturday, April 21, at 10 a.m. in downtown Needville. Also included in the schedule of events are Princess & Queens contests, hay hauling contest, and bake-off. Visit <http://needvillyouthfair.com> for more info.



**FOR A COM-  
PLETE LIST OF  
UPCOMING  
EVENTS—  
VISIT OUR  
WEBPAGE!**

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## **Shooting Sports News.....For the Three Fort Bend County Clubs**

**2012 Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Extravaganza**—Saturday, April 21, 2012 at the Texas 4-H Conference Center on Lake Brownwood. This is a beginners match only. Go to [texas4-h.tamu.edu](http://texas4-h.tamu.edu) to learn more.

**2012 D9 4-H Air Rifle , Rifle & Air Pistol Competition**—Saturday, April 28, 2012 at the Fort Bend Co. Extension Education Building. Go to [d94-h.tamu.edu](http://d94-h.tamu.edu)

**State 4-H Rifle Match**—Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2012. For more information, please visit the Texas 4-H Natural Resources Program website or contact the office via email at <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/natural>



## **Newest Agent in Fort Bend..... Welcome!**

Our newest member of the Texas AgriLife Professional staff started on May 14, 2012. Ms Dianne Gertson, formerly the County Extension Agent in Wharton Co. became the new CEA-FCS here in Fort Bend. Dianne has a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Houston.

Dianne will be coordinator for the Better Living for Texans program, conducting foods and Nutrition Workshops for both youth and adults, conducting food preservation classes and Food Protection Management & Safety classes. Let 's welcome Dianne to Fort Bend County.