

Making a Difference in Fort Bend County...

1st Quarter Newsletter

January-December 2019

Special Topics for Winter 2018

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Jan.—March, 2019 TOTAL CONTACTS

383 educational sessions
52,522 attendees
(75.6% adults, 24.4% youth)
(49.6% male, 50.4% female)
1,369 Social Media posts
20,707 Soc. Media followers
29 Newsletter Editions
35,801 Newsletter contacts
805 Volunteers assisted
3,146 Volunteer hours
41,883 Edu. Resources Used

Message from the Co. Extension Director — 2019 will be an exciting year for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service as we embark on our 105th year as part of the USDA Cooperative Extension Program. We will begin 2019 with several new programs. Our most exciting one is called Path to the Plate. Path to the Plate is a comprehensive, educational approach to providing relevant, current, and factual information to consumers. Our goal is to educate consumers so they can make informed decisions when it comes to agriculture and their health. Path to the Plate is an unbiased examination of agriculture, the food we eat, and the connection to our health. The program is designed to deliver correct, research-based information via a variety of methods. The overarching goal of the Path to the Plate program is to help all Texans to who want to make informed decisions based on truthful and accurate information. More specific objectives of the program include:

- To work with organizations, agencies, communities and individuals to provide Texans with a wealth of information and perspectives so they may make better informed decisions about the food they



Vince J. Adams

Bob Hebert, Former County Judge—Honored



Former Fort Bend County Judge Robert “Bob” Hebert has been a fixture of leadership and a true friend of AgriLife Extension since his election in 2003. Judge Hebert actively supports educational efforts relating to all areas of AgriLife Extension, but specifically, he supported AgriLife Extension’s growth and expansion through the years, allowing

us to add new programs, expand our support staff and grow our lineup of specialists to include a Texas Parks & Wildlife Biologist and two Community Health Partnership Specialists through HHSC. He has always supported youth programming and is considered a regular visitor and project supporter for 4-H clubs and FFA chapters.

Judge Hebert was recognized in January at Texas A&M with a *2019 Extension in the City Award* for outstanding support and leadership by an elected official for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service programs serving urban areas of the state. Texas A&M

Master Gardeners Host Quail Valley Elementary 4-H Club



The mission of the Fort Bend Master Gardener Program is to provide current, research-based horticulture information and education to the public. These efforts expand the Texas AgriLife Extension Service's capacity to meet the increasing demand for horticulture and environmental information. The Master Gardeners are Extension's "first responders" to meet the needs of our citizens for gardening advice. Through participation in educational activities and outreach projects, our Master Gardener volunteers increase their own personal knowledge in horticulture and enrich their lives with new friendships and community involvement.

As an example, the FBMG's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) hosted Quail Valley Ele-

34th Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference

This informative conference is a regional event involving efforts of seven counties. It was held on February 7 at the Fort Bend Co. Fairgrounds, and was deemed another huge success because of interests, partnerships, diversity, and technology. Participation included over 218 paid participants, 14 commercial exhibitors, 9 speakers and 45 guests including volunteers. Major sponsors were Capitol Farm Credit and Fort Bend Farm Bureau.



Our very special guest speaker was our new County Judge K.P. George who "welcomed" the crowd. We again included a program segment from our FCS division. Local FCS agent Leticia Hardy demonstrated healthy desserts during the

Coastal Prairie Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists!



The Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists (CPCTMN) is a group of trained volunteers who share their appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through outreach education and conservation/restoration projects in or near the Fort Bend and Waller County areas. Programs are free and open to the public and are held on the first Thursday of the month at the Rosenberg Civic Center located at 3825 TX-36 in Rosenberg, Texas. Join them at 6:30 p.m. for a 30-minute social and then at 7:00 p.m. for the hour long

program. To learn more about this exciting program go to: <https://txmn.org/coastal/>.

Current ongoing projects include.

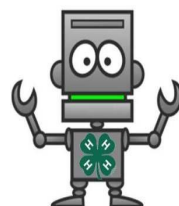
- **EARTH DAY!** A variety of activities will be offered to the public for free at the Seabourne Nature Park in celebration of Earth Day on April 22, 2019. The public is invited to help with a prairie restoration planting of native wildflowers or join a Master Naturalist guided tour of the butterfly garden, bird sanctuary or the prairie demo and other gardens.
- **SEABOURNE CREEK NATURE PARK** – Our signature project offers a butterfly garden, lake hike, wetlands area, prairie demo garden, prairie restoration area, and woodlands & bird sanctuary.
- **BIRD HIKES** – Monthly bird hikes are offered at strategic times throughout the year. For a full list of the birds

Come Join Texas 4-H! It's fun!

Texas 4-H is a club for kids in 3rd–12th grade, with programs for K–2nd as well. Project opportunities range from food science and robotics to fashion design and photography. There's a 4-H activity for everyone! Join for \$25 or less! Texas 4-H is for kids of almost any age – grades K–2 can be in Clover Kids. From 3rd–12th grades, you can be a regular 4-H member. Contact us at <http://agrillife.org/ftbend4h/> or complete the contact request form at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/register/> to find out what is available where you live. All 4-H members must be enrolled in at least one project. When you choose a project, you will learn everything there is to know about that topic. You will participate in various hands-on activities, learn new skills, do community service, or even make speeches about your project.

How to choose your 4-H project: 1) Select a project you like; 2) Consider the money and time it will take and check to see if parents, guardians, and/or grandparents can help; 3) Consider the space and equipment that you have at home in support of large animal projects; 4) A 4-H project should be fun, serve a purpose, and be worth the effort; 5) Select only the number of projects you can realistically complete.

Then locate a 4-H Club near you and contact the club manager. Club meeting locations & times are noted on the following website: <http://agrillife.org/ftbend4h/clubs/>. Choose which would be more convenient for your family and contact the manager to confirm their next meeting date. Attend a meeting to see if it's right for you. If not, check around to find one that fits. Once you



“Grow Your Own” Classes Are Happening!



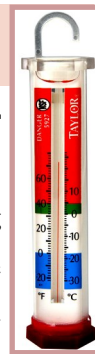
Want to develop your gardening skills? Want to be the best gardener in your subdivision? Want to beat your neighbors in growing the best fruits and vegetables around? Yea! Then just for you, Fort Bend Master Gardeners are hosting a series of classes that might be the ticket to the best garden in the neighborhood.

The Texas A&M AgriLife® Extension Service in Fort Bend County, along with the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, present Grow Your Own, a six-class program on creating a productive edible garden in the home landscape. Participants will learn how to start a garden, the keys to success, what to plant and when, and how to reap the benefits of year-round food production in Fort Bend County. All classes will combine indoor and outdoor lessons and be held from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. as follows:

- Saturday, April 13, 2019 *Spring Vegetables Maintenance & Summer Vegetables*
- Saturday, June 15, 2019 *Fruit Trees, including Semi-Tropicals*

Safe Handling of Fresh Produce!

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet, but...harmful bacteria that may be in the soil or water where produce grows may come in contact with the fruits and vegetables and contaminate them. Or, fresh produce may become contaminated after it is harvested, such as during preparation or storage. Eating contaminated produce (or fruit and vegetable juices made from contaminated produce) can lead to foodborne illness, which can cause serious — and sometimes fatal — infections. However, it's easy to help protect yourself and your family from illness by following these safe handling tips!



- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- When selecting fresh cut produce (melons, mixed salad greens, etc.) choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market.
- Refrigerate at 40° F or

2018 Agri. Result Demo. Handbook—new at our website!

If you were at the Winter Row Crops meeting in January, 2019, we had hard copies of the *Fort Bend County Result Demonstration and Applied Research Handbook* which are now available online. We have information on yield data from the county Corn, Sorghum, and Cotton plots, fertility results, corn-aflatoxin results, sugarcane aphid management in sorghum, cotton defoliation, and pasture weed management. For electronic copies of reports, please go to:

Snap-Shot of Upcoming Events:

- Fruit & Nut Grafting Clinic—April 6 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Food Preservation: Tomatoes—April 12 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Parenting Connections Workshop—April 23 @ 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- Needville Youth Fair—April 26 @ 8:00 am - May 5 @ 5:00 pm
- Butterfly Celebration—May 4 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Food Preservation: Freezing & Dehydration—May 10 @ 9:00 am - 12 pm
- Food Handler's Course—May 17 @ 9:00 am—11:00 am
- Child Care Providers—June 1 @ 8:00 am—12:00 pm
- Parenting Connections Workshop—June 11 @ 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- Path to the Plate Media Contest—May 1 @ 5:00 pm
- Big Time in D9 - May 2 @ 8:00 am - May 4 @ 5:00 pm
- Texas 4-H Round-Up—June 10 @ 8:00 am - June 13 @ 5:00 pm
- Home Fashion Design Camp—June 18 @ 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Food Handler's Course—July 18 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 a.m.
- EarthKind Kids' Kamp—July 22 @ 9:00 am - July 26 @ 3:00 pm

For all of the above programs visit us online at fortbend.agrilife.org; or call 281-342-3034 or email us at fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu.

A Glimpse of Fort Bend Co.

In 2018, the population of FBC has reached 764,828 of which 41.4% are college educated, 88.5% are high-school graduates and the average household income is \$118,558.

For over 20 years, we have been in the top 20 counties in the U.S. for economic excellence and population growth – and that is by design and not by accident. “Among the largest counties (>250,000 or more in 2015), Fort Bend was the fastest growing as we climbed 4.3% between 2014 and 2015, to 741,237”.

Excellent schools, affordable housing, planned communities and extensive recreational facilities have attracted families with impressive demographic profiles. These actions results in a local employment



Vincent J. Mannino

County Extension Director - Fort Bend County

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