



# Making a Difference in Fort Bend County...

3rd Quarter Newsletter

July-August 2021

## Special Topics for Spring 2021

- Director's Message—Retirement (8/31/21)
- COVID-19 Updated Fort Bend Co. Guidelines
- Texas Department of State Health Svcs.'s Food Handlers' Class
- FBC Emergency Alert & Warning System
- Fort Bend County Continues Growth
- Upcoming Events for Sept.-Dec., 2021
- Contact Information

## Director's Message: Retirement!

It is with much thought and consideration that I have made the decision to retire effective August 31, 2021 after 37+ years with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. This has been the most difficult career-related decision I have ever made, but one that has been long coming, predicted and quite natural for most dedicated employees.

The first twenty-one years, serving as Co. Extension Agent – Horticulture in Tarrant County (6.5 yrs.) and then Jefferson County (14.5 yrs.) were enjoyable and relatively easy, since both gardening and commercial horticulture were my family's way-of-life since the early 1900's. During this time of my Extension career, it was as if I was being paid to play – where my avocation and vocation were one in the same. The past sixteen & one-half years as County Extension Director in Fort Bend County have been some of the most challenging, yet most enjoyable and most fulfilling of my entire career. During my time here I have enjoyed incredible support from most everyone. My Fort Bend County support staff, under the watchful eye of Ms. Cheryl Wasicek, Admin. Mgr., are truly dedicated to each and every program area. My County Extension Agents under AgriLife and the Extension Agents with CEP have always tried to meet the ever-changing needs of our clientele to the best of their ability while juggling their own private lives. The SE Region Leadership Team has never faltered in support and guidance of all of our agents across the region. Our Senior Leadership Team, our Central Leadership Team, and our Urban County Extension Directors have always tried their very best to stay focused on the future of Extension even during difficult times – and we've had quite a few. The support of countless numbers of program leaders, specialists, neighboring agents, and our own dedicated volunteers (past & present) truly have helped our programs to stay relevant and timely.

I have enjoyed working with our very supportive Fort Bend County Commissioners' Court, our county department heads and our legislators, local school districts, local representatives/partners of agriculture industry, the Fort Bend Fair Association, the Fort Bend County Farm Bureau, and our building neighbors – the USDA and its members.

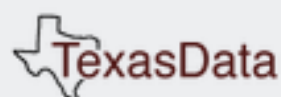
It is my hope that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension continues to stay focused on meeting the needs of our citizens, both traditional and emerging needs. And, that a timely decision is made on a new hire as Co. Extension Director – Fort Bend.

## July-August 2021

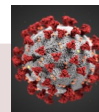
### TOTAL CONTACTS

(virtual contacts skew totals)

206 Educational Sessions  
60,159 Contacts  
808 Social Media Posts  
35,068 Soc. Media Followers  
23 Newsletter Editions  
45,055 Newsletter Contacts  
240 Volunteers Assisted  
661 Volunteer Hours  
384 Edu. Resources Used  
Clientele Reached:  
32.50% Youth  
50.40% Adults  
17.10% Undetermined



## Fort Bend COVID-19 Updated Guidelines



The Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Center issued a new updated set of Covid-19 guidelines to ensure the safety of individuals when at work, following the preventive guidelines can slow the spread of COVID-19. The below document is designed to provide guidance to County offices/departments and their employees to protect themselves and the public. To sum it up: 1) Entrance to County offices will require temperature screening; access denied if 100.0 F or greater; 2) Wash hands often with soap & water for at least 20 seconds; or use hand sanitizer (or both!); 3) Keep a 6' distance from others; avoid large gatherings; 4) Wear face mask to cover mouth & nose when interacting with public, in a meeting, or in transit within buildings. 5) Cover your mouth/nose if you cough or sneeze; use tissue of inside of elbow; 6) Sanitize your work station twice a day; 7) To ensure the safety of others, following these guidelines can slow the spread.

Should you have any questions regarding protocol, please call the Fort Bend office of AgriLife Extension or Fort Bend Department of Health & Human Services.

*Thank you & stay safe!*



## Food Handlers' Class

Texas Department of State Health Services accredited food handlers program is now being offered here in Fort Bend County under the direction of Ms. Diane Gertson, County Extension Agent—Family & Community Health. This class is recommended for all food service employees to help promote the service of safe food. The class is a basic overview of food safety practices that are necessary to ensure you serve safe

food at your establishment. Some practices discussed are: 1) Good Personal Hygiene; 2) Cross Contamination; & 3) Time & Temperature Abuse

If you would like to learn more, come to our 2-hour food handlers training. Our next upcoming trainings will be held September 10 and November 19, 2021. These are 2-hour classes. Class begins at 8:45a.m.-11:00 a.m. (No admittance after 9 a.m.). Cost is \$20 charged at time of registration with Check or Money Order Payable to: AgriLife Extension – Acct #230202

Call to reserve your spot or fill out the online form at: <https://fortbend.agrilife.org/fch/food-handlers-class/>. Please note: Due to COVID capacity restrictions, classes are currently limited to 6 participants—face-to-face.



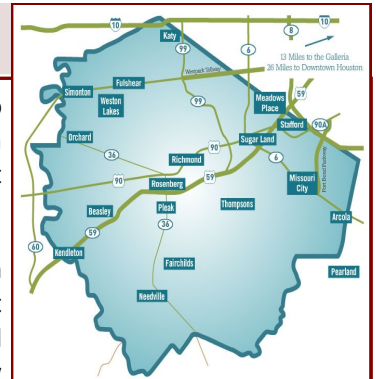
With Hurricane Ida fresh on everyone's mind and the on-going issues related to COVID-19, many of our programs are hampered by emergencies. Fort Bend Office of Homeland Security

has implemented an alert system that is both handy and easy to use. To get alerts about emergencies and other important community news simply sign up for the Emergency Alert Program. This system enables our emergency folks to provide you with critical information quickly in a variety of situations, such as severe weather, unexpected road closures, missing persons and evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods. You will receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify, such as your home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more. You pick where, you pick how. To sign up—go to: <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085616997#/signup>

## Fort Bend County Continues Growth!

Once a small community with a couple hundred thousand residents, Fort Bend has grown to nearly 900,000 people at the end of 2020, and projections are growth will continue. Growth projections estimate the county will exceed 1 million residents by 2027, and by 2050, the Fort Bend County is expected to have 1.8 million residents.

Growth is not new to Fort Bend. From 2010 to 2020, the population in Fort Bend grew from 590,253 to an estimated 857,324. Comparing the past 29 year growth with the expected next 29 year growth demonstrates that, although the growth won't be as massive as the initial growth phase, the numbers are still significantly impactful. From 1992 to 2021, Fort Bend grew by 239 percent, and from 2021 to 2050, that increase is expected to be about 144 percent.



## List of Upcoming Events

To view upcoming programs visit us online at [fortbend.agrilife.org](http://fortbend.agrilife.org);

For more info: Call 281-342-3034 or Email us at [fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:fort-bend-tx@tamu.edu).

- \* Walk Across Texas – Diabetes Edition, September 8 @ 11:30 am
- \* Food Handlers Course, Sept. 10, 9-11:00 am, online/virtual
- \* Grow Your Own—Fruit Trees, Sept. 18, 9-10:30 am, online/virtual
- \* Fort Bend County Fair Day (office is closed)
- \* AG'tivity Barn Exhibits open—FBC Fair, Sept 24– Oct 3, during fair hours
- \* 2021 Texas Fruit Conference, October 11—12, From 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- \* Grow Your Own – Composting, October 23 @ 9:00 am - 10:30 am
- \* Food Manager Certification Course registration deadline, Nov. 2 @ 5:00 pm
- \* Food Handler Course, November 19 @ 9:00 am - 11:00 am



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