

## FORT BEND COUNTY AT-A-GLANCE

- **Fort Bend County is one of the most affluent and diverse counties in the nation.** With significantly urban areas and distinctively rural areas, community needs are unique in this growing and thriving county.
- **Location:** Houston metropolitan area of southeast Texas, encompassing a total of 875.0 square miles (562,560 acres).
- **Cities and towns** all or partly in Fort Bend County: Arcola, Beasley, Fairchilds, Fulshear, Katy, Kendleton, Meadows Place, Missouri City, Needville, Orchard, Pearland, Pleak, Richmond, Rosenberg, Simonton, Stafford, and Sugar Land, Weston Lakes, Thompsons, Fairchilds, and Pleak. Census-designated places include Cinco Ranch, Cumings, Fifth Street, Four Corners, Fresno, Greatwood, Mission Bend, New Territory, Pecan Grove and Sienna Plantation. Richmond is the County Seat.
- **Population:** 889,146 according to US Census 2022 estimates. (Largest city: Sugar Land-106,622; Smallest: Thompsons-178.) The Fort Bend Economic Development Council predicts population will exceed 1.1 million by 2030.
- **Diversity:** 25.5% Hispanic/Latino; 21.6% Asian; 30.2% White/non-Hispanic; 21.9% Black; 0.7% other
- **Education:** 35.8% H.S. Diploma or GED; 7.2% Associates Degree; 28.6% Bachelors Degree; 19.5% Masters Degree or higher
- **Median Income:** \$96,468 per household
- **Agriculture:** In 2017 there were 1,155 farms (down 10% from 2012); 279,483 acres of farmland (down 18%); and the average size of farm was 242 acres (down 8%). Land in farm use: 50% croplands; 43% pastureland; 6% woodlands, and 1% other.
- **Health:** A 2022 Fort Bend County Health and Human Services Community Health Assessment (CHA) identified the county's top five priorities (in order) as Mental Health, Housing, Obesity, Heart Disease, and Prenatal Care
- **Youth:** The 6 School Districts in Fort Bend County have about 150K students, and 95 languages spoken. There is also a large homeschool contingency, although exact numbers are difficult to find. Four institutes of higher education are within county lines (U of H, HCC, WCJC, and TSTC)

## VOLUNTEERS

**Volunteers play an important role in Extension outreach.** "Master" volunteers, advisory committee members, project leaders, and others extend our efforts.

### Master Gardeners: 167

- Average annual hours per volunteer: 95
- In-kind contribution: \$495,781.25

### Master Naturalists: 252

- Average annual hours per volunteer 97
- In-kind contribution: \$763,875.00

### All Extension volunteers in 2023: 960

- Total estimate average hours: 57,640
- Total In-kind Contribution: \$1,801,250.00

**4,811**

Hours reported in TAMED  
for "non-educational"  
volunteer work in 76 sessions

## VALUE OF EXTENSION WORK

### Impact in Fort Bend County

Extension Education in Fort Bend County has a significant influence. Recovering from post-covid slumps, programming is continuing to return and renew. Staff positions have been added and job descriptions refined for effectiveness and efficiency. As a part of the Urban Program Unit in Extension, efforts are directed toward the exceptional needs of the area.

**24,456**

Contacts in 1-to-1 meetings

**29,137**

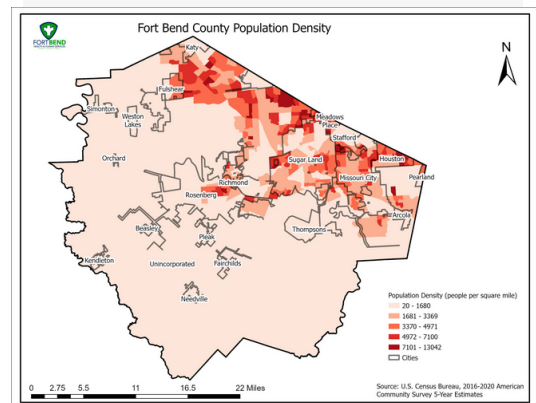
Educational Program Participants

**757**

Educational Sessions

**78,225**

Educational Contact Hours



## AGRICULTURE

- **New Landowner Series:** Six 2-hour sessions, 64 participants.
- **Pesticide Applicator training:** 123 participants, 6 events with opportunity to earn up to 23 CEUs.
- **Cooperative Extension Programs:** Hemp Production, Grafting Trees, Aquaponics/Hydroponics, Feral Hog Management, Ag Law/Exemptions, Pollinators, and Forests: 210 registrants, 100 attendees

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- **4-H Awards Banquet** annual event to honor 4-H members for their achievements: 114 youth recognized for county, district, and/or state level participation.
  - 5 Clover Kids (K-2nd grade)
  - 41 Juniors (3rd-5th grade)
  - 35 Intermediates (6th-8th grade)
  - 33 Seniors (9th-12th grade)
  - Overall, participation increased from 8 contests to 12, with 267 contest entries.
- **Livestock Projects**
  - 274 validations for 4-H and FFA
    - 170 lambs & goats
    - 27 heifers
    - 77 steers
  - 96 4-H youth (30 families) participated in major shows
  - 4 Clinics/Preparation Education
- **Other 4-H projects**
  - Recordbooks - 34 books
  - Food Challenge - 5 teams
  - Duds to Dazzle - 2 teams
  - Robotics - 1 club, 3 teams
  - Consumer Decisions - 5 youth
  - Public Speaking - 9 youth
- **Fundraisers**
  - Pecan Sales: \$4,044 net profit
  - Bingo Night: \$1,116 raised

## 4-H PROGRAM STATS

4-H is a mainstay of Extension programming. Volunteers including 4-H leaders and Master Gardener Youth Outreach Committee support enrollment and outreach.

- **Fort Bend County 4-H Club enrollment**
  - 25 chartered clubs: 3 Shooting Sports, 5 Specialized, 3 School, 14 Community-based
- **Total enrollment 608 - a 34% increase over 2022**
  - 450 Club members (3rd-12th grade)
  - 49 Clover Kids (K-2nd grade)
  - 109 Volunteers (registered adult leaders)
- **Youth Outreach**
  - Special Interest/Short Term projects: 967
  - Day Camp programs: 1,763
  - School Enrichment programs: 555

## HORTICULTURE

- **Grow Your Own:** a series of 6 in-person classes based on Earth-Kind principles, 2,081 registrants, 488 attended in person, followed by 826 full views on YouTube.
- **Landscape Success:** 8 classes offered via Zoom, 1,191 registrants, 633 participants in real time, 917 full views on YouTube.
- **38th annual Regional Vegetable Conference:** a one-day 5-hour in-person event offered 3 CEU's for TDA pesticide applicators license holders and covered a variety of topics, 148 participants and 58 exhibitors and guests for a total of 206 attended.
- **Master Gardener Intern Training:** 19 new members completed 48 hours of training and 50 hours of volunteer service.
- Award Winning **Vegetable Garden Enhancement Project:** FBCMGA won 1st place in the teaching site category in the 2022 Texas Master Gardener Association's (TMGA) Search for Excellence awards. This category recognizes a project which establishes a new or substantially enhances an existing physical location for educational purposes to display or share best Horticulture practices. *(Team pictured below)*



## FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **Walk Across Texas:** 127 participants in an 8-week physical activity program.
- **Child Passenger Safety:** 64 child safety seats installed and inspected.
- **Senior Health and Safety Expo:** 97 participants and exhibitors in a 4-hour event for older adults.
- **Youth Fashion Camp:** 9 youth learned new clothing and fashion skills in a 4-day (24 hours total) event.
- **Mental Health First Aid:** 17 participants completed 8-hour certification training.
- **Families Reading Every Day:** 514 Head Start families participated in 4-week literacy and strengthening families program.
- **Better Living for Texans (SNAP-Ed):** 65 sessions, 288 participants 123 educational contact hours
- **AgriLife Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP):** 116 sessions; 1359 participants, 1,399 educational contact hours.
- **Texas Extension Education Association:** 13 members, semi-monthly meetings with training on Disaster Preparedness, Herbs, Chair Yoga, Vitamins and more.
- **Cooperative Extension Programs:** EFNEP and FCH: Spring Break and Summer "Block Party" 5-day camps for youth, Taste of African-American Heritage, Taste of Latin-American Heritage, Master of Memory, Eating Smart Being Active, and Choose Health Food, Fun, and Fitness (CHFFF). These programs resulted in 989 contacts, with an additional 1,218 outreach contacts.



National 4-H week recognition at the County Commissioners Court meeting - October, 2022



*"4-H serves a great purpose in our children's lives. We could not have achieved all the positive changes and learning that our kids have experienced this past year without the help of our extension office."*

-Claudia Stephens, 4H Leader



## ALL HANDS ON DECK

A yearly event that involves the entire Extension staff in one way or another is the "AG'tivity Barn" - a part of the Fort Bend County Fair, hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program, and Fort Bend County 4-H with support from Texas Farm Bureau. AG'tivity Barn is a multi-faceted agriculture awareness event. An educational area under the George Pavilion, AG'tivity Barn is open evenings and weekends for the public to peruse. Also, 4th grade students in Fort Bend County are invited to school tours each weekday morning. Students rotate through a variety of stations to learn about and the role of agriculture and health in the everyday lives of Texans.

- **Fair dates:** Sep. 23 to Oct 2, 2022
- **School tours:**
  - 604 students
  - 169 adults
- **Public viewing:** estimated 52,440 of the 87,400 fair attendees
- **Topics covered:** corn, cotton, rice, poultry, beef, bees, wildlife, pecans, nutrition, and physical activity.



The AG'tivity Barn provided "hands-on" experiences.



Participants can "duck in" to the AG'tivity Barn to see and learn.



School Tours include a circuit of educational stations, such as this "nutty" one about pecans.

## EVALUATION STRATEGY

Each agent and program area utilizes a variety of methods to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts. Qualtrics is used for surveys that can be taken online and translated into graphic data. Many programs have built in surveys that come from registration and wrap up information. In some cases, paper surveys administered for participants on site.

- The Texas A&M Evaluation Data system (known as TAMED) collects report information entered by staff members. Data is collected on the state level for Legislative Budget Board reports. Locally, the system provides an effective and useful means of capturing contact data and narrative information for individual staff members, program units, and/or the entire county staff collectively.
- **This document is only a *brief overview* of Extension work in Fort Bend County.** All components of this report have additional information available.

## RESULTS

The TAMED system collects data entered by AgriLife Agents and Staff members. The system was implemented in September of 2022. There has been a learning curve in using the system and putting the right information in the right locations. The numbers below represent the data collected September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023, specifically for Fort Bend County's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's faculty members and county employee entries in TAMED. Report numbers for the Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program are not represented in these collective totals as the CEP staff utilizes a separate reporting system. However, PVAMU CEP reach is substantial, and their work is integral to Extension in FBC.

**In addition to the numbers reported on page one:**

- **150** newsletters with **43,084** contacts were reported.
- **223** social media posts with **14,568,816** contacts/views were reported.
- **35** promotional activities reported with **56,674** participants/contacts were reported.
- **724** Individual Performance tasks reported with **3,402** hours of engagement.

## SUMMARY

FY 2023 has been a year of change and growth for the Extension office in Fort Bend County.

- County Extension Director, **Amy Ressler received her doctorate degree** in Leadership Studies from Our Lady of the Lake University. Her dissertation "*The Relationship between Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction among Extension Employees*" was published through ProQuest in January of 2023.
- AgriLife's **EFNEP program was expanded into Fort Bend** adding 2 positions.
- Better Living for Texans program **upgraded the educator position** to Extension Agent.
- Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program **added an Extension Agent position** for Community Economic Development
- Recruitment efforts led to **new staff on board** for FY 24
- The **County Support Staff** are AMAZING. The FBC Extension program only thrives because of their work and dedication!

## FUTURE PROGRAMMING

FY 2024 will focus on continued growth and development of excellent programming.

- **Texas Community Futures Forum** will be hosted between January and April to identify strategic plan initiatives for the next 3-5 years.
- The 3rd Annual **Urban Programming Workshop** will be held along with Harris County in August of 2024 allowing staff to collaborate and focus on unique aspects of our work in urban areas.
- **Advisory boards will be emphasized** as community connections remain the premier method for gathering input and directing programs.

*"One of my most memorable experiences has been the collaboration between volunteers and our agent in bringing gardening education out of a classroom and into a teaching garden where people of all ages can feel empowered and inspired to grow nutritious food, conserve water, and compost yard waste. A fine example of how Extension and Master Gardener volunteers work together to improve lives and communities."*

-Peggy d'Hemecourt, Master Gardener

# MEET THE TEAM

**OUR TEAM IS COMPRISED OF  
A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP  
AMONG STAFF MEMBERS FUNDED BY  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE  
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM (CEP)  
AND FORT BEND COUNTY  
WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP TEXANS THRIVE**



*Agrilife, CEP, and County Staff pose with Judge George at the Festival of One, August 2003*

## ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Amy Ressler, County Extension Director  
Cheryl Wasicek, Administrative Manager  
Doug Staff, Technical Assistant  
Karen Santos, Administrative Specialist

## 4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Danielle McLure, County Extension Agent - 4-H Youth Development  
Dr. Willa Williams, County Extension Agent - Urban Youth Development  
Vacant, CEP Extension Agent - 4-H  
Kally Felcman, Livestock Coordinator  
Jennifer Evanicky, Administrative Assistant 4-H

## AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES/HORTICULTURE

John Few, County Extension Agent - Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Dr. Abdul Hakeem, CEP Extension Agent - Agriculture and Natural Resources  
James "Boone" Holladay, County Extension Agent - Horticulture  
Kally Felcman, Livestock Coordinator  
Brandy Rader, Program Coordinator - Master Gardeners/Master Naturalists  
Lorraine Niemeyer, Administrative Assistant - ANR/Hort

## FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

Leticia Hardy, County Extension Agent - Family and Community Health  
Nisa Khan, County Extension Agent - Family and Community Health  
Erica Knighton, CEP Extension Agent CEP - Family and Community Health  
Celeste Feast, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans  
Sujata Jhangiani, Extension Assistant - Expanded Food & Nutrition Education  
Vacant, Nutrition Education Associate - Expanded Food & Nutrition Education  
Krystal Wilcox, CEP Nutrition Education Associate - Expanded Food & Nutrition  
Victoria Zwahr, Program Coordinator - Family and Community Health

## COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Janelle Johnson, CEP Extension Agent - Community Economic Development



*Staff participated in an Urban Programming Workshop (held in the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management training room) to collaborate on effective strategies in urban environments.*



*Staff development activities include occasional "pep rallies." On August 31, 2023 the office had a New Year's Eve Party to ring in the new program year!*



*Brandy Rader, MG/MN Coordinator (pictured left) and Victoria Zwahr, FCH Coordinator (pictured right), both celebrated 10 years of employment with Fort Bend County*



For more information:  
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