

Special Topics for Spring, 2013

- Upper Gulf Coast Wildlife Expo & Trade Show
- Fall Master Gardener Short Course
- Coastal Prairie Master Naturalist
- AG'tivity Barn — Agri Awareness
- Pesticide Applicators' Training
- Backyard Basics — Food Production, Use & Preservation
- Take A Stand — Against Bullying
- 2013 Step Up & Scale Down
- County Statistics
 - Top 10 Employers
 - Income levels
- Calendar of Upcoming Events

Oct. - Dec. 2013

TOTAL CONTACTS

303 educational sessions
257,940 attendees
1,497 site visits
1,231 office visits
1,582 phone calls
15,971 emails
779 websites
3,481 mailouts

Upper Gulf Coast Wildlife Expo & Trade Show

Fort Bend County is blessed with a diverse mix of professional, technical, skilled, and unskilled labor force that thrives on outdoor activities relating to nature tourism. To address the needs of clientele with this type of interest, the 1st Annual Upper Gulf Coast Wildlife Expo was held Nov. 6, 2013 in Simonton, Texas on the property of Twinwood US Inc. at Rio Brazos Hunting Preserve. Nature tourism, feral hog hunting and property tax valuation for wildlife management areas were just a few of the points of focus at the Wildlife Expo & Trade Show. The event was sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Twinwood Ranch.



The Expo was open to landowners, hunters and wildlife enthusiasts as well as those seeking to supply materials, equipment and serve as brokers for such activities. Dr. Greg Kaase, AgriLife Extension Economist at College Station organized the event with five departments participating. "We strived to cover several topics that appeal to many landowners and those with interests in hunting or managing hunting operations" said Kaase.

Participating speakers included Dr. Jim Cathey, AgriLife Extension Wildlife Specialist, who presented "Property Tax Valuation for Wildlife." He was followed by David Lobpries, Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department on "Wetland Management for Waterfowl." Then Peter Woods, Aquaculture Specialist with AgriLife Extension talked about "Fish & Aquatic Plant Management," and Miles Phillips, AgriLife Extension Specialist with Parks & Recreation covered "Wildlife & Nature Tourism Enterprises." Later in the day the afternoon topics included T.J. Muir, Management Biologist with Texas Parks & Wildlife on "Feral Hog & Predator Hunting" and finally a presentation on "The Role of Aerial Gunning in Feral Hog Hunting by representatives with Vertex Tactical Aviation.

A total of 35 attendees were present plus 10 Extension professionals and 8 resource persons/vendors. Attendees indicated that 60% plan to take actions or make changes based on the information provided by this activity and 87% of respondents anticipate benefiting economically as a direct result of what they learned. More than 97% were satisfied with the material presented and timeliness of the subject matter.

2013 Fall Master Gardener Short Course

The twenty individuals enrolled in the Fort Bend County Fall 2013 Master Gardener class will contribute in minimum of 1000 cumulative hours of volunteer service in the coming year. For each consecutive year they remain certified, they also contribute a minimum of 36 hours of additional education and support. The knowledge gained will help each of them serve as localized stewards in their neighborhoods and other ranges of influence. This exponentially helps Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in fulfilling its goal of reaching and educating the diverse population of Fort Bend County.

This program required participants attend fifty hours of classroom instruction. Classroom instruction introduces the participants to the basics of horticulture including trees, perennials, landscape design, propagation, turf, entomology & plant pathology, and the Earth-Kind® approach to landscaping & water conservation. The Master Gardener training course is an intense one-month long course, with classes held two days each week.



Texas Master GardenerSM



Coastal Prairie Master Naturalist

Chapter Award Pins - Chapter Members received certification, recertification, and milestone hour's pins at the Chapter Biannual Meeting Tuesday, January 21st. The left photo shows from right, front row: Toni Huff, Stella Davison, Hal Fuglaar, Pat Mollere, and Linda Rude, back row: Rick Davison, Mark Morgenstern and Jimmie Brannon. The right photo shows Lisa Marler, Diane Russell, Toni Huff, Barbara Willy, Mark Morgenstern, Bob Schwartz, and Vicki Poorman. Congratulations to all!



In addition, the CPMN were excited to report on the Prairie Heritage Festival held Nov. 6, 2013 at Seaborne Park in Rosenberg. Over 600 people attended and participated in the fun-filled, educational event.

A BIG THANKS to the support of the FB County employees and Commissioner Morrison - Prec. 1, Mayor Morales, and many others, including all of the vendors, exhibitors, presenters, and volunteers, who made the 2013 Prairie Heritage Festival was a wonderful success! Topics included birding, fish, reptiles, vultures, ferrets, prairie restoration, butterflies & beneficial insects and more.

2013 AG'tivity Barn @ the Fort Bend County Fair

The 14th Annual AG'tivity Barn was a HUGE success! With Fort Bend County having an ideal mix of rural and urban sectors, it is essential that AgriLife Extension take an active role in educating youth about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. Fort Bend is unique in its demographic makeup with the north & east portions of the county being urban, while the south & west half remaining rural.

AgriLife Extension developed and implemented AG'tivity Barn fourteen years ago as a means of educating youth (as well as adults) to address the relevant issue of agriculture literacy. Interactive exhibits included vegetable & herb gardening, landscaping, water harvesting, wildlife, fish & alligators, poultry & hatching chicks, swine, beef, dairy, sheep & goats, crops (rice, cotton, corn), horse, soils, plant parts and bees & honey.

AG'tivity Barn was conducted during the FB County Fair and involved 26 collaborators to reach over 1463 elementary school students and 120 teachers & chaperones during school days. In addition 60% of the 97,973 fair visitors attended AG'tivity Barn, and over 400 youth entered the coloring contest. A total of 21 exhibits were utilized to promote the ag industry in Fort Bend with 78 volunteers & 12 agencies assisting. Yes, what a success!



Pesticide Applicator Trainings ...valuable to licensed applicators

As of the end of 2013, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Bend County has helped 273 area individuals in receiving the needed instructions associated with both, licensing and continuing education units for TDA private pesticide and commercial/non-commercial pesticide applicators. Pesticide trainings are important to homeowners, farmers, ranchers, government employees and others needing to stay current and maintain legal status with TDA. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service coordinated with TDA to present specific trainings based on the user group or groups targeted. Subjects ranged from pest ID & control, drift minimization, sprayer calibration, environmental protection, laws & regulations, integrated pest management, right-of-way pest control and more.



Backyard Basics - new for 2013

Backyard Basics (ByB) is a new concept that started in the San Antonio area in early 2013, then was modified to fit the needs of Fort Bend County clientele. ByB promotes healthy living by providing all residents of Fort Bend County and neighboring cities information about the benefits of homegrown and homemade foods. The lecture series provided consumers, backyard gardeners, homemakers, educators and farmers “do-it-yourself” learning opportunities relating food production, usage and food storage. The series consisted of 8 lectures relating to backyard vegetable & fruit production, composting, water conservation & harvesting, food dehydration & freezing, orchard fruit production, and selecting & grilling meats.

Each Saturday during the summer on into the fall, 1/2-day trainings attracted a total of 110 participants that learned how to “farm” in their own back yards and how to preserve their bounties.

Future programs being planned for 2014 include small flock poultry production, small herd goat & lamb production, aquaponic production systems, cut flower & herb gardening, beekeeping & honey production, and canning of jams & jellies. There will be updates on Upcoming Events on our website. For more information on these events and registration, please contact Administrative Assistant Brandy Rader at brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu or (281) 342-3034. Visit <http://fortbend.agrilife.org> to download and print fliers. Also visit us on Facebook at Fort Bend County Extension. Please pass along this information to friends and neighbors. We aim to spread the word and get our communities back to the basics of home food production and preservation.



2013 Take A Stand Against Bullying

Conflicts among youth regarding adolescent behavior and bullying have been increasing dramatically over the last 10 years. School districts across the state have been mandated by the Texas Legislature through two bills (House Bill 212 and 283) to adopt and implement a dating violence and a discipline management policy across the state. Both bills require training for teachers and staff as well as a training curriculum for youth to address these issues. In response to this action, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Fort Bend County and the Sugar Land Skeeters partnered together to take on the issue of bullying at Wessendorff Middle School in Rosenberg, as well as Creek Side Church in Needville; YMCA in Missouri City; Burton Elementary in Stafford and the 1st Annual *Day to Take A Stand* Camp in Rosenberg. Lessons from the curriculum were taught at all locations around Fort Bend County. Take A Stand teaches students how to run the bases around bullying through lessons on communication, teamwork, and cultural awareness.

Throughout the program, the students practiced communication techniques, learned the golden rules of teamwork, and discovered why cultural sensitivity is essential in our changing world. The research based program not only raises awareness of the bullying epidemic, but also provides direction on how to respond to bullying and offers skills to promote peaceful resolutions.



Winning the game with Skeeter's mascot Moe's home run during a lesson on teamwork.

We had a total of 973 students go through the lessons that were taught and a total of 827 respondents (85%) that completed the post survey. Cumulative results indicated 76.2 % of the respondents had a change in behavior due to the program, with 80.6 % giving positive feedback on the overall program. In addition, teachers and school administrators were well pleased and have begun scheduling TAS for the 2014 school year.

Take A Stand is available to all schools and youth organizations in Fort Bend County. To find out how to team up with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service & the Cooperative Extension Program of PVAMU and make plays against bullying in your area, contact the AgriLife Extension 4-H & Youth Development at 281-342-3034.

2013 Step Up and Scale Down



In Texas, an estimated 66.6% of residents are at risk for being overweight or obese according to 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). In Public Health Region 6/55 (Texas Dept. of State Health Services) 65.8% of residents are at risk for being overweight or obese according to 2010 BRFSS. With the issue of excess weight already a concern for many residents, it is critical to remind Fort Bend County employees and residents of the health risks associated with obesity. Excess weight has been identified as a risk factor for several chronic diseases including heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and some forms of cancer.

The Step Up & Scale Down program is based on the 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines. It is an 8 week program designed to support people who want to live healthier lifestyles. The program uses weekly motivation, support, and accountability to assist people in meeting their goals. In 2013, the Step Up and Scale Down program was offered to Fort Bend County employees. A total of 55 participants registered for the Step Up and Scale Down program with 24 completing the program. A total of 185.6 pounds were lost by the participants completing the program for an average of 7.7 pounds lost per participant. The recommended weight loss is 1 – 2 pounds per week or 8 – 16 pounds for the 8 week program.

10 Top Employers in Fort Bend County for 2013

EMPLOYER	EMPLOYEES	JOB FOCUS
Fort Bend ISD	9,085	Public Education
Lamar CISD	2,884	Public Education
Fluor Corporation	2,400	Engineering, Construction
Fort Bend County	2,269	County Government
Methodist Sugar Land Hosp.	2,200	Healthcare
Schlumberger Tech. Corp.	2,150	Energy Exploration
Richmond State School	1,370	Special Education
United Parcel Service	924	Package Distribution
Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice	816	State Prison
Oak Bend Medical Center	668	Hospital

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:

- **Child Care Providers Education class:** Saturday, January 25 from 8 a.m. until noon, Fort Bend Co. Extension Office
- **Pesticide Recert. Course for TDA & Structural PC Licensing:** Dec. 12 & Jan. 14—Fairgrounds
- **Cupcake Fun Wksp.:** Friday, Jan. 3, from 9 - noon, Fort Bend County Extension Office
- **4H Record Book Training:** Jan. 14, Fort Bend Co. Extension Office
- **Fort Bend County Vegetable Conference:** February 6 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Rosenberg TX
- **Preserving the Bounty** (scheduled classes): March 1 9:00 am - October 23 @ 12:00 pm, Rosenberg
- **Preserving the Bounty** (Freezing & Drying) Wksp.: March 1 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, Rosenberg
- **Reining Horse Clinic:** March 15 7:00 am - 5:00 pm, Rosenberg

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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.