



**LRGVDC  
Environmental News**



# Local Official Receives State Honor and Recognition

Mayor James Matz, City of Palm Valley was awarded the 2004 Texas Environmental Excellence Award (TEEA) by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for his ongoing efforts in reforestation and environmental conservation in the Rio Grande Valley. In an area that has seen tremendous growth and development over the past 15 years, Mr. Matz has fostered a bicultural spirit of cooperation. As founder and chairman of the Valley Proud Environmental Council, he has galvanized thousands of volunteers through tree-planting events, reforestation projects and clean-up efforts in communities on the U.S. and Mexican sides of the Rio Grande. Mr. Matz and Valley Proud promote the planting of native trees through All Valley Arbor Month/Arboles de Amistad and Project Rio Reforestation.

In addition, as creator and project manager of the Ramsey Nature Park project, he helped transform a former landfill into an outdoor classroom and a site along the Great Texas Birding Trail. James Matz is living proof that one person can make a difference. Recipient of numerous environmental honors, such as Urban Forestry Leadership Award from the Texas Community Forestry Award and 2nd Place Gulf Guardian Award from Gulf of Mexico Program. He is also a member of the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group and Past LRGVDC Solid Waste Advisory Committee Chairman.



(from left to right) Larry Soward, TCEQ Commission; Kathleen Hartnett White, TCEQ Commissioner; Georgiana Matz; James R. Matz; and R. B. Marquez, TCEQ Commissioner.

## Earth 911

**1-800-CLEANUP—[www.CLEANUP.org](http://www.CLEANUP.org) and [www.Earth911.org](http://www.Earth911.org)**

Earth 911”, developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a free service is a public and private sector partnership between federal, state and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private sector businesses. Earth 911 is operated nationwide at no cost to communities. It’s mission is to empower people of all ages with geographically-specific environmental and recycling data and information, thereby enabling citizens to protect the environment in their own backyard.

“This nationwide system operates through a single toll-free number, 1-800-CLEANUP, and web site, [www.CLEANUP.org](http://www.CLEANUP.org) and [www.Earth911.org](http://www.Earth911.org). By entering their five-digit zip code, users can access several sections of specialized environmental information from the user’s nearest recycling center to the latest volunteer opportunity. The possibilities are endless, because sections of the Earth 911 system can be easily tailored to fit the exact needs of organizations and

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# LRGVDC Solid Waste Advisory Committee Ranks FY-2005 Implementation Projects

The LRGVDC Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) met September 9, 2004, to review and rank FY-2005 Solid Waste Implementation Projects. The LRGVDC Board of Directors provided final approval of these projects at the September 30th, 2004, LRGVDC Board of Directors meeting. Projects receiving funding include:

*Project funds distributed locally for Solid Waste implementation projects totaled \$306,850.*

<u>Local Enforcement Projects</u>	<u>Source Reduction/Recycling &amp; Education Projects</u>
Cameron County	Cameron County
City of Harlingen	Pharr San Juan Alamo ISD
City of San Juan	City of Weslaco
Hidalgo County Precinct #3	City of McAllen
City of Primera	City of Port Isabel
	City of San Benito
	City of Brownsville
	City of La Feria

Solid Waste implementation projects funds are available on a Bi-Annual basis to cities, counties and school districts. The funds must be used to implement projects on Source Reduction & Recycling, Education & Training, Solid Waste and Local Enforcement projects. For more information please call the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Planning Department at (956) 682-3481.

## Illegal Dumping Enforcement

In the Rio Grande Valley, the general public may not know that throwing their old tires, household trash, or motor oil in a ditch or empty lot could be a crime. Not only is it a crime, but these actions can also have serious environmental and economic implications.

With stricter environmental regulations facing municipalities and businesses, illegal dumping and littering are growing problems in Texas, as well as serious environmental crimes. Keep Texas Beautiful has taken the leadership role on the issue of illegal dumping and litter law reinforcement by offering seminars and conferences. They have also formed a statewide task force to share information, discuss the issue and develop solutions.

Keep Texas Beautiful along with the City of Brownsville will be sponsoring a free workshop. For more information contact Mack Guerra at the Brownsville Recycling Center at (956) 831-3641.



## Resource & Information Center

The LRGVDC's Resource and Information Center is open to the public. It provides information on topics relating to Colonia Data, Environmental Resources, Solid Waste Information and Census data. You are welcome to visit the Center by contacting the Planning Department at (956) 682-3481.



LRGVDC Resource and Information Center

### Topics

- Solid Waste Management Composting Methodology
- Educational Data
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Re-buy
- Colonia and Rural Development Data
- Water Quality, US & Mexico and Water Conservation
- Federal Emergency Management Agency FEMA) and National Flood Insurance
- Environmental Resources

# Get to know your Local Recycling Mascot

Education and Training is a major factor on all source reduction & recycling efforts. Your local Recycling mascots could play a major role in these efforts. Therefore it is very important that everyone in the community become familiar with the recycling mascot. This article features only a few of the local recycling mascots. Additional mascots will be featured in the future.



Captain Crab—Rio Grande Valley Recycling Mascot



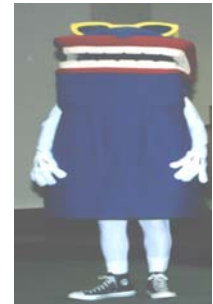
Gerit—San Juan's Recycling Mascot



Roxie—Edinburg's Recycling Mascot



Rio the Parrot—Brownsville's Recycling Mascot



Curby—McAllen's Recycling Mascot

The LRGVDC Regional Solid Waste Management Plan states Education & Training as one of the major goals. The Recycling Mascots attract the students' attention and help teachers educate them on the fundamentals of Recycling, Reducing, Reusing and Rebuying.

## Texas Recycles Day—November 15th

Communities all across Texas use this opportunity to focus and raise public awareness on the economic and environmental benefits of waste reduction and recycling. In 2003, a total of 333 events promoting recycling and reuse were reported across the state and 202,394 Texans participated and volunteered in Texas Recycles Day Events. Approximately 1,039,239 people were reached through attendance and publicity and 35.5 million H-E-B grocery bags with the Texas Recycles Day logo were distributed.

*In order to focus attention on the importance of keeping recyclables out of landfills, November 15th has been declared as "Texas Recycles Day" since 1996.*

### Local Upcoming Events:

The **City of Brownsville** along with Keep Texas Beautiful will be sponsoring two workshops for all interested individuals. The workshops are "Stop Trashing Texas-It's the Law" tentatively scheduled for November 8th and another training - Teacher's Composting Workshop (date pending). For more information please contact Mack Guerra at the Brownsville Landfill (956) 831-3641. The **City of McAllen** will be providing tours of the Recycling Center and field trips for students during the week of November 15th, Texas Recycles Day. For more information please contact Elvira Alonzo at the Recycling Center at (956) 688-3266. The **City of Edinburg** will also be providing tours of the Recycling Center on November 12th. For more information please contact Janie Chapa at the Edinburg Landfill at (956) 381-5635.

## Amazing Facts About Recycling



Recycling just one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for 3 hours.

Recycling your daily newspaper for one year would provide the pulp equivalent of 2/3 acre of commercial forest. One ton of newspaper saves 17 pine trees.



You could power 18 million American homes with the energy saved by recycling steel each year.



Recycling a four-foot stack of newspaper produces as much paper pulp as a 40-foot pine tree.



Every day, American businesses generate enough paper to circle the Earth 20 times.



Manufacturing recycled paper produces 55% less air and water pollution than manufacturing paper from virgin wood.



Motor oil does not wear out. It simply gets dirty. It can be refined and used again and again.

Ask for recycled oil at your local auto parts store. **When used motor oil** is poured into the ground, it can seep into the groundwater & contaminate drinking water.



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## Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Members

The LRGVDC Solid Waste Advisory Committee consists of 25 voting members and over 20 non-voting members. The Committee reflects a broad range of interests in solid waste management, and members include representatives from public sector (county, city, etc.), private sector group, educational group, environmental group and private citizen group. The non-voting membership includes TCEQ representatives and any interested individuals from cities, private, county, citizens, etc. The main objective of the SWAC is to deal with regional issues concerning solid waste management and to provide recommendations to the LRGVDC Board of Directors. This issue's spotlight member is Mr. Arturo Guajardo, Solid Waste Advisory Committee Chairman. Mr. Guajardo was appointed to the committee in 1998 and has served on the committee for 6 years, 4 years as Chairman. Mr. Guajardo is also on the LRGVDC Board of Directors and the current Pharr San Juan Alamo (PSJA) Superintendent. In spite of his very busy schedule Mr. Guajardo, manages to attend all Solid Waste Advisory Committee meetings and other Environmental functions such as a Recycling Workshop called "Don't Throw Your Money Away, Recycle" held last year in which he was a speaker. The PSJA School District under his leadership, is one of the few school districts maintaining a strong commitment to solid waste management practices.



Solid Waste Advisory Committee Chairman

### Solid Waste Advisory Committee Voting Members

Arturo Guajardo, Education	Frank Bejarano, Cameron County	Roy Quintero, Hidalgo County	Simon Salinas, Willacy County
David Ivory, Brownsville	Miranda Key, Harlingen	Jerry Ortega, McAllen	Ramiro Gomez, Edinburg
John Avilez, San Juan	Don Medina, Pharr	Juan Flores, Weslaco	Alicia Baldovinos, Port Isabel
Darla Jones, La Feria	Luciano Ozuna, Jr., Alamo	Al Gonzalez, Private Sector	John Dick, Private Sector
Debbie Mason, Private Sector	David Cooper, Private Sector	Esteban Gonzalez, Education	Laura Maxwell, Environmental
Deborah Cox, Environmental	Darrell Mangham, Private Citizen	Vacant	Vacant