

## Membership Approves Work Program and Budget for FY 2008

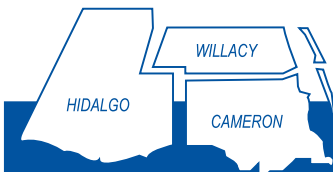
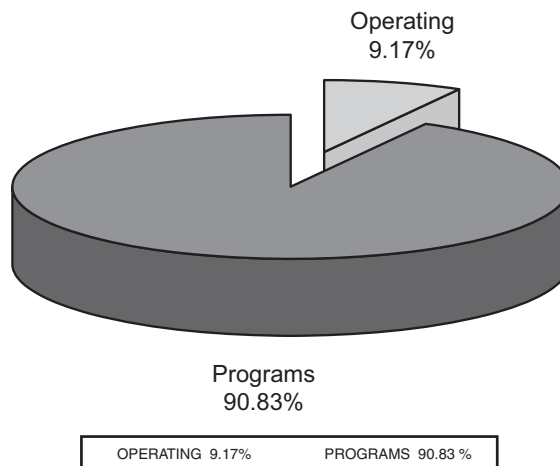
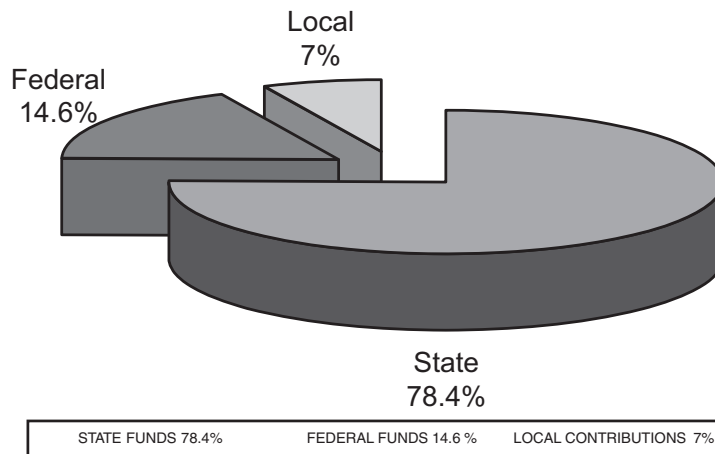
The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) membership has approved the 2008 Work Program and Budget that will allow the Council to continue its active role in the Region. The new FY 2008 budget puts emphasis on and addresses needs within Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties in programs such as Transit, Criminal Justice Assistance, Homeland Security, Law Enforcement Training, 9-1-1 Coordination, Solid Waste, Water Quality/Quantity Planning, Economic Development, and the Area Agency on Aging.

The Development Council employs 112 individuals and will operate on an annual

budget of \$12.6 million in 2008. "The budget reflects a sound organization and the continued regional support of comprehensive services provided," said Hon. Norma Garcia, LRGVDC President. "Local revenues are used successfully to leverage state and federal funds. Only 1.7 percent of the Council budget is generated from membership dues."

State income sources include the Texas Office of Rural Community Affairs, Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, Texas Department of Transportation, TDPS/State Homeland Security and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. Federal sources for funds include, the Economic Development Administration, the Corporation for National Service, and the Federal Transit Administration.

### LRGVDC 2008 BUDGET



## LRGVDC Staff received Years of Service Recognition at the LRGVDC Board of Directors Meeting, February 28, 2008

Fernando Castillo	<i>5 years of service</i>
Manuel Cruz	<i>5 years of service</i>
Diana De Anda	<i>5 years of service</i>
Roberto Diaz	<i>5 years of service</i>
Paul Dulcet	<i>5 years of service</i>
Debby Morales	<i>5 years of service</i>
Fernando Rodriguez	<i>5 years of service</i>
Juan Torres	<i>5 years of service</i>
Olga Arias-Hernandez	<i>10 years of service</i>
Alma Guerrero	<i>10 years of service</i>
Josefina Martinez	<i>10 years of service</i>
Elida Carranza	<i>15 years of service</i>
Ann Lyles	<i>20 years of service</i>
Anna Hernandez	<i>30 years of service</i>



## The Lower Rio Grande Valley is Serious About Hurricane Preparedness

Once again the Valley is gearing up for the hurricane season and interest in preparedness has never been higher. In preparation for the hurricane season, the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) and the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) have targeted the region for several hurricane meetings and exercises that will culminate with a full scale hurricane exercise in May.

The LRGV had its first Hurricane Planning Meeting at the Brownsville Public Library on January 17th and the outpouring of support was so great that the meeting was literally "standing room only." The meeting included representation from Elected Officials, Police, Fire, Medical, Public Health, School Districts, volunteer organizations, Evacuation Hubs, and Emergency Managers from the city and county levels. The attendance was literally twice what the planners from TEEX expected from previous years and the attendees were clearly ready to take care of business. There were many insightful discussions that led to planning future breakout groups to develop plans for specific issues like the Evacuation of people with special needs from the region.

This amazing outpouring of support at the planning meeting continued at the Hurricane Tabletop Exercise on February 5th. Even though the exercise was full to capacity, our region had the opportunity to work together in groups to work through all the issues that arise before and after a hurricane so that everyone knows what to do and how they fit into the regional response to a hurricane. Many agencies came away with valuable information, essential contacts, and a realistic view of what will happen during an actual hurricane.

The next key event in the region's preparation will come in April at the new Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) Drill. This will be the first year that our region participates in the ROC Drill. The drill basically uses a computer driven simulation to train participants in key decision making skills, incident management, staff responsibilities, and situational awareness associated with a catastrophic hurricane. The ROC Drill will take place at the Emergency Operations training Center at College Station and it is intended for elected and senior appointed officials.



## RGV Regional Bus Rodeo

The LRGVDC Transit Department would like to give a huge CONGRATULATIONS to Driver Mr. Robert Carlos Treviño for Placing Second at the 1st Annual 2008 Rio Grande Valley Regional Bus Rodeo. For those who may not be familiar with Bus Rodeo's, contestants are put through 4 different skill tests, knowledge of commercial drivers license (CDL) requirements, wheelchair securement and safety, equipment inspection and functionality, and finally the most intensive of the 4, the obstacle course. Mr. Treviño was one of 14 drivers that competed at the 1st Annual 2008 Rio Grande Valley Regional Bus Rodeo and he placed 2nd in the Para-Transit competition, excelling on his maneuvering of the obstacle course as well as scoring virtually perfect on his wheelchair securement and safety equipment inspection portions of the Rodeo. His 2nd place finish earned him the right to compete at the State Regional Rodeo in Waco, Texas on April 12.

Mr. Treviño first obtained his license in 1998 and was an instructor at South Texas College training CDL drivers on how to properly pass endorsement tests and how to properly maneuver heavy tractor-trailers for over the road travel. As a relatively new employee he is proud to represent the LRGVDC at the state competition and looks forward to the competition.



## Texas Falls Prevention Project

The Area Agency on Aging (LRGVDC) is one of seventeen Area Agencies on Aging participating in the evidence-base "A Matter of Balance" falls prevention project. This is a statewide project being administered by the Texas Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The "Matter of Balance Program" is an evidence-based

activity program that targets community-dwelling older adults. Launched in 1998, the program reduces the fear of falling, stops the fear of falling cycle, and increases activity levels among older adults. It's a two-pronged approach to fall prevention that focuses on changing both attitudes and behaviors that predispose older adults to falls.

As part of the program, Master Trainers were trained in Austin. In turn, each program is to train local coaches to assist in training seniors. Elida Carranza, Technician IV with the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging and Genoveva Martinez, with Migrant Health Promotion are the Master Trainers for the Valley. On February 21st, twenty-three coaches were trained. Training sessions for groups of 8 to 10 seniors will be starting in March in order to complete the program by August 31st.

## Home Repair Project Serve Seniors

The First United Methodist Church of McAllen's Cornerstone Project is once again repairing homes for local seniors in need. Every year the volunteers from the United Methodist Church volunteer during the weekend to build ramps and fix the homes that are on the list of the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging's Case Management Program. Case Managers select seniors from their caseload and submit the names for consideration. This year, 8 seniors were selected. The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) awarded the LRGVDC an innovation award in 2003 for its coordination efforts with a faith-based organization in providing home repairs to the elderly.



*Cornerstone Volunteers just completing a ramp build for a senior.*

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<b>Andrew Canon</b> Director, Hidalgo County MPO	<b>Manuel Flores</b> Director, Transit Services
<b>Juan Gomez</b> Director, 9-1-1 Services	<b>Manuel Cruz</b> Director, Homeland Security

## Mission Statement

“ENCOURAGE AND PERMIT LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT TO JOIN AND COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR ECONOMIC INTERESTS, CITIZEN GROUPS AND GROUPS EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC DISTRESS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THEIR CITIZENS AND TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION”

### REGIONAL PURSUITS

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