

Arturo Ramirez Elected LRGVDC President



At a recent Membership meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC), Mr. Arturo Ramirez was unanimously elected President of the Board. "I am extremely honored to have been elected as the new LRGVDC President, and I look forward to continuing the positive momentum and progress created by Past Presidents of this organization. The regional approach is an effective way to address the comprehensive needs of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and the LRGVDC will continue to be a leader in this regard," stated Mr. Ramirez.

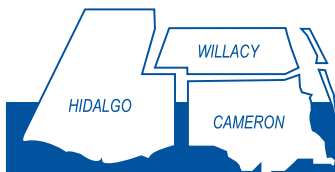
The remaining LRGVDC Board officers elected are: McAllen Commissioner John Ingram, 1st Vice President; Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell, 2nd Vice President; Hidalgo Mayor Pro-tem Alvin Samano, Secretary; Hidalgo County Commissioner Sylvia Handy, Treasurer; and, Hidalgo County Treasurer Hon. Norma G. Garcia, Immediate Past President. Other members elected to the LRGVDC Board of Directors include: Commissioner Edna Tamayo, Cameron County; Judge Pro-tem Emilio

Vera, Willacy County; Commissioner Roel Landa, City of Alamo; Commissioner Carlos A. Cisneros, City of Brownsville; Mayor David S. Simmons, City of Donna; Mayor Pro-tem Eddy Gonzalez, City of Edcouch; Council Member Gus Garcia, City of Edinburg; Mayor Steve Brewer, City of La Feria; Mayor Joel Quintanilla, City of Mercedes; Mayor Norberto Salinas, City of Mission; Mayor Leo "Polo" Palacios, Jr., City of Pharr; Mayor Orlando Correa, City of Raymondville; Mayor Joe Hernandez, City of San Benito; Mayor Pro-tem Lupe Rodriguez, City of San Juan; Mayor Buddy de la Rosa, City of Weslaco; Dr. J. Gilbert Leal, TSTC; Mr. Roberto Loreda, Donna I.S.D.; Mr. Gale Armstrong, El Jardin Water Supply; Mr. Michael G. Wilson, Port Mansfield PUB & Willacy County Navigation District; and Mr. Don Medina, Member-at-Large.

The LRGVDC Board meetings are normally held the 4th Thursday of each month. For more information on meeting times and locations please visit our website at www.lrgvdc.org.



Outgoing Board President Hon. Norma G. Garcia (left) was recognized with a plaque presented by newly elected Board President Mr. Arturo Ramirez at the June LRGVDC Board of Directors meeting.



Ombudsman Sponsored 2nd Annual Workshop For Social Workers

The Ombudsman Program held their 2nd Annual Long Term Care Workshop May 21st thru May 22nd in Weslaco. Social Workers from all the nursing homes in the tri-county area were invited to attend. Twenty-three attended the workshop and some came from as far as Corpus Christi.

Workshops included presentations on the Ombudsman Program, the Public Benefits Counseling Program, Medical Power of Attorneys, Advanced Directives, and Exploitation in the Nursing Home, Guardianship Program, Texas Legal Services, Medicare Fraud, and Millers Trust. The second day was devoted to Ethics. The training provided the Social Workers with continuing education units that can be used towards their license renewals.

Seniors Assisted with Home Repairs

Aside from the regular residential repairs under Title III of the Older Americans Act, a continuous effort to assist elderly residents from the McAllen area with home repairs, the 1st Methodist Cornerstone Project in late May, assisted two elderly ladies with grab bars throughout the hallway and bathroom entrance, by doing so the clients retained a sense of security.

Under the Department of Aging and Disability Services' Housing Bond Project, a total of five elderly residents' homes in the Raymondville area have been addressed, and two additional units are in the process of being completed. Three elderly clients were assisted with ADA bathroom modifications. One of them had eleven windows replaced throughout the house. Another client was assisted with replacement of three doors including the exterior front door and grab bars and ADA facilities. Another client was assisted with the replacement of floor tile that was hazardous causing several falling accidents. The City of Raymondville provided the local match to provide this needed service in their community.

MMRSSC Award for Outstanding Service

On Thursday, June 5, 2008 the LRGVDC MMRSSC recognized Eduardo Olivarez for outstanding leadership and Service as Chairman. Kenneth N. Jones, Jr. had the honor of presenting the award.

Mr. Olivarez was instrumental and an important voice for the regional MMRS Program. His dedication and influence brought significant awareness to the public about the program, now in its fifth year.



Kenneth N. Jones, Jr., Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Executive Director (left) and Eduardo Olivarez, Chief Administrative Officer, Hidalgo County Department of Health and Human Services (right).

LRGVDC Office Displays Arroyo Colorado Watershed Model

The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Model was displayed at the LRGVDC Office in McAllen, Texas, as part of the education and outreach activities of the LRGVDC's Texas Commission on Environmental Quality contract.

The plastic relief model of the Arroyo Colorado watershed was built to help educate people about the watershed and the geography of Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties. The 3 x 8 feet model was made by Paul

Bond of Texas State University and Dr. Jude Benavides; undergraduate student Anthony Reisinger from UTB engineered the model.



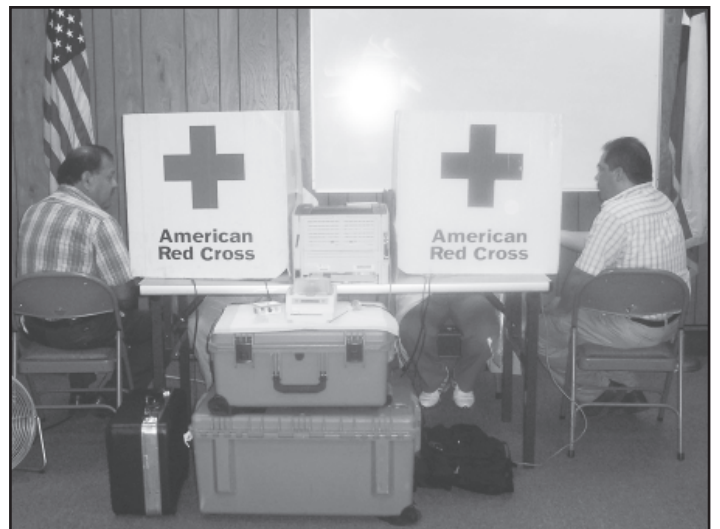
LRGVDC Hosts American Red Cross Blood Drive

On Wednesday, May 7, 2008 the American Red Cross held a “Rock and Roll Up Your Sleeve” blood drive at the Old McAllen City Hall which houses the main offices for the Development Council. Red Cross Team Leader, Margaret Ramirez, stated “there is always a blood shortage in the Rio Grande Valley.” This is most likely due to misconceptions of adverse effects from donating, such as: a person will gain weight if they donate blood or that a person is over 56 years of age is too old to donate. However, Ms. Ramirez reassures us that a person in their 70’s and even 80’s can donate, provided they meet all the other requirements. In fact many Mobile Home Parks host blood drives during the peak of the Winter Texan season. Also, many people feel very good after donating blood because of the satisfaction they get from performing a noble, unselfish act. Also blood is a universal product because it is not restricted to any particular race, religion, color, creed, country, continent or gender.



David McCoy cheerfully makes his donation.

Nineteen (19) LRGVDC and City of McAllen Staff members donated during this event and their donation will have several uses. Whole blood can be used as is; however it is usually separated into red cells that are commonly used for trauma victims or during surgery, plasma which can be frozen for up to a year and is commonly used for burn patients and bleeding disorders, and platelets which are used for cancer patients and organ transplants. If you would like to schedule a donation please call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543).



Israel Yañez and Jaime Garza go through prescreening.

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors 2008-2009
Executive Committee**

Mr. Arturo Ramirez Grassroots Organizations	President
Commissioner John Ingram City of McAllen	1st Vice President
Mayor Chris Boswell City of Harlingen	2nd Vice President
Mayor Pro-Tem Alvin Samano Member-at-Large	Secretary
Commissioner Sylvia Handy Hidalgo County	Treasurer
Honorable Norma G. Garcia Member-at-Large	Immediate Past President

Remaining Board Members

Commissioner Edna Tamayo	Cameron County
Judge Pro-tem Emilio Vera	Willacy County
Commissioner Roel Landa	City of Alamo
Commissioner Carlos A. Cisneros	City of Brownsville
Mayor David S. Simmons	City of Donna
Mayor Pro-Tem Eddy Gonzalez	City of Edcouch
Council Member Gus Garcia	City of Edinburg
Mayor Steve Brewer	City of La Feria
Mayor Joel Quintanilla	City of Mercedes
Mayor Norberto "Beto" Salinas	City of Mission
Mayor Leo "Polo" Palacios, Jr.	City of Pharr
Mayor Orlando Correa	City of Raymondville
Mayor Joe Hernandez	City of San Benito
Mayor Pro-Tem Lupe Rodriguez	City of San Juan
Mayor Buddy de la Rosa	City of Weslaco
Dr. J. Gilbert Leal, President	T.S.T.C.
Mr. Roberto Loreda	Donna I.S.D.
Mr. Gale Armstrong, Manager	El Jardin Water Supply Corporation
Mr. Michael G. Wilson, Manager	Port Mansfield PUB * Willacy Co. Navigation Dist.
Mr. Don Medina	Member-at-Large

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Joe González <i>Director, Area Agency on Aging</i>	Manuel Flores <i>Director, Transit Services</i>
Andrew Canon <i>Director, Hidalgo County MPO</i>	Manuel Cruz <i>Director, Homeland Security</i>
Juan Gomez <i>Director, 9-1-1 Services</i>	Victor Morales <i>Procurement Officer</i>

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

REGIONAL PURSUITS is the newsletter published by the LRGVDC. This publication is financed in part through funding assistance from State and Federal grants. REGIONAL PURSUITS is available without cost and inquires should be directed to:

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