

**Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
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Contacts For LRGVDC Administered Programs

Kenneth N. Jones, Jr. Executive Director	Ann Lyles Director, Finance
Anna Hernandez Director, Human Resources	Terrie Salinas Director, Economic Development
Joe González Director, Area Agency on Aging	Sandra Boyd Director, Homeland Security and Regional Training
Andrew Canon Director, Hidalgo County MPO	Manuel Flores Director, Transit Services
Juan Gomez Director, 9-1-1 Services	

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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REGIONAL PURSUITS

Membership Approves Work Program and Budget for FY 2007

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) membership has approved the 2007 Work Program and Budget that will allow the Council to continue its active role in the Region. The new FY 2007 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 104 individuals and will operate on an annual budget of \$13.6 million in 2007. “The budget reflects a sound organization and the continued regional support of comprehensive services provided,” said Commissioner Sylvia Handy, LRGVDC President. “Local revenues are used successfully to leverage state and federal funds. Only 1.4 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 Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony

The LRGVDC recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for expansion of its Transportation Center. The original facility was built in 1993 with funding assistance from TxDOT and the Federal Transit Administration. Originally, this facility housed the Rio Transit Rural Transportation Program which provided five (5) fixed routes within the three county region. In 1993 the center housed 11 employees, 9 buses, 3 mini-vans and service shop. Today the LRGVDC Rio Transit Center houses 34 vehicles (rural and urban), 32 drivers and 8 administrative staff.

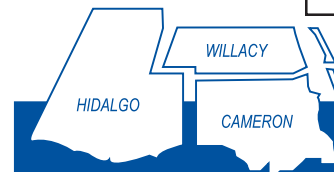
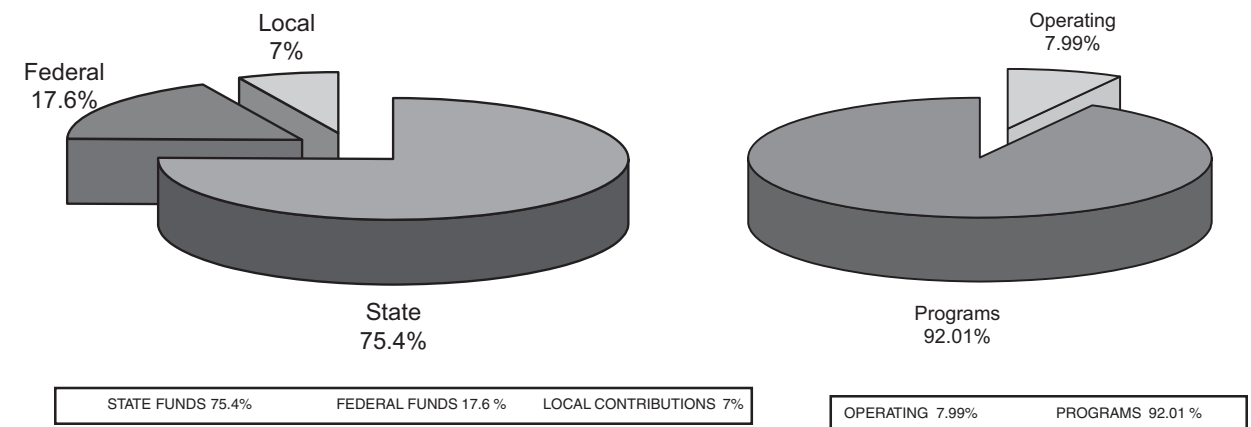
In an effort to enhance transportation coordination while taking advantage of economies of scale, LRGVDC’s expanded facility will also be home to the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization, which include 7 professional staff members. Additionally, the LRGVDC & HCMPO will be providing administrative support to the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority.

The architect firm of Negrete & Kolar designed the facility and the building contractor is Rigney Construction. Funding for the project was provided by the Federal Transit Administration.



Regional leaders shown participating in Groundbreaking Ceremony for the LRGVDC Transportation Center.

LRGVDC 2007 BUDGET



Lower Rio Grande Valley
Development Council
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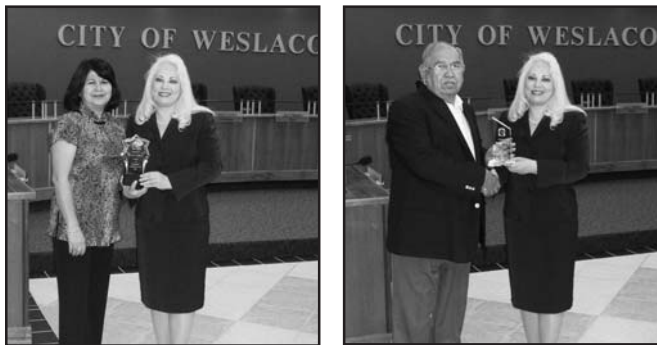
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LRGVDC Staff shown above were recognized for their years of service by the LRGVDC Board of Directors.

Front Row: Israel Yanez, 5 years of service; Anna M. Hernandez, 5 years of service; Alonzo Rodriguez, 5 years of service. Back Row: Ludivina Saenz, 10 years of service; Tomas Reyna, 5 years of service, and Mary Villarreal, 10 years of service. Not Shown: Eduardo Alvarado, 5 years of service.



Commissioner Sylvia Handy (right) recognizes Terrie Salinas, LRGVDC Director of Economic Development for 30 years of service to the LRGVDC, and Manuel Flores, LRGVDC Director of Transit Services for 15 years of service to the LRGVDC.

Regional Police Academy and Training Center

The LRGVDC 119th Basic Peace Officer Academy program will begin on April 14th at the Harlingen T.S.T.C. campus facility. This will be a full time day program.

The LRGVDC 120th Basic Peace Officer Academy will begin on June 22, 2007. This academy is a full-time day academy 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, and will be conducted at Mission Police Department. Registration for the Pre-entrance exams and the application process will begin in April.

The LRGVDC 121st Basic Peace Officer Academy will begin August 13, 2007. This academy will be a part-time evening academy program, Monday through Friday, 6:00pm to 10:00pm and will be held at the Kleberg County Sheriff's Department in Kingsville. Pre-entrance exam dates will be announced shortly.

The LRGVDC 122nd Basic Peace Officer Academy is scheduled for September 15, 2007. This will also be a part-time evening, Monday through Thursday from 6:00pm to 10:00pm and 8:00am to 5:00pm on Saturday. Program, Pre-entrance exam dates will be announced at a later date.

LRGVDC Receives DE-CON Units

Through State and Federal funding sources the LRGVDC was able to purchase two self contained decontamination trailers to be used by hospitals throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley area for hazardous material decontamination. The trailers, one of which is shown here, will be housed at the Hidalgo County Health Department and Cameron County Public Health Department. The trailers can then be taken to any location throughout the region to respond to HAZMAT incidents.



Shown above at the DE-CON Unit demonstration are from right to left, Weslaco Commissioner Adrian Gonzalez; Hidalgo County Commissioner Sylvia Handy, LRGVDC President; Ken Jones, Executive Director; and, Sandra Boyd, Director of LRGVDC's Homeland Security and Training Department.



State Representative District 39 Armando "Mando" Martinez (right) presents LRGVDC President Commissioner Sylvia Handy and Executive Director Ken Jones a State of Texas House of Representatives Certificate in recognition of the LRGVDC Transportation Center Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Area Agency on Aging Director serves as Keynote Speaker to RSVP Annual Volunteer Recognition

Jose L. Gonzalez, Director of Area Agency on Aging was the Keynote Speaker for the Annual Volunteer Recognition for the RSVP Program. Mr. Gonzalez addressed the over 300 volunteers present. The main topic was how the Retired Senior Volunteer Program was one of the answers to the challenge issued by President John F. Kennedy's statement during his inauguration speech regarding "what can you do for your country". Further, how this program will continue to address today's and tomorrow's challenge for Civic Engagement. This program will also be an avenue for the Baby Boomers to continue to be active during their retirement years.

Area Agency on Aging Active Partner in Health Fairs

In partnership with Martha Williams, a United Methodist Church Wesley Nurse, the case management and caregiver Information service departments attended a series of Mini Health Fairs. The health fairs were held three consecutive Sundays in February at different parishes. The events were in recognition of Heart Health Month. The Area Agency on Aging had a table with information on the services available to seniors. The purpose of the fairs was to meet the needs of the community and to seek out community input concerning health promotion programs to those who attended. Staff participation include; Noemi Rodriguez, Caregiver Information Services Technician; Josefina Martinez, Program Administrator for Case Management Services, and Diana Enriquez, Staff Ombudsman.

The Foster Grandparent Program Needs Volunteers

The program provides an opportunity to individuals aged 60 and over that meet a certain income requirement, love children, and are willing to volunteer twenty (20) hours a week to become Foster Grandparents. Since its inception, the program has provided young and old a chance to grow together.

Every day in communities across the Lower Rio Grande Valley and America, Foster Grandparents are the people children in need depend on for love, wisdom, and support. Foster Grandparents volunteer in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, correctional institutions, and Head Start. They help children who have been abused or neglected, mentor troubled teenagers, and young mothers, and care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities. The heart of the program is the one-on-one daily attention that Foster Grandparents provide. This special care helps young people grow, gain confidence, and become more full and productive members of society.



Foster Grandparents receive a small, tax-free stipend to cover the cost of serving. They also receive transportation assistance, meals while on duty, an annual physical examination, and supplemental accident and liability coverage while they are serving. All Foster Grandparents receive forty (40) hours of pre-service orientation and additional monthly training. For more information, please contact Sylvia Yanes at 682-3481 or syanes@lrgvdc.org.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Did you know that more than 60% of nursing home residents do not have any family or visitors? Advocate for nursing home residents who need a voice. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Area Agency on Aging is looking for self-motivated and objective individuals to become an Ombudsman volunteer. The Ombudsman volunteer will receive training and volunteer two to three hours per week at an assigned nursing home assisting elderly Texans to protect their rights. They assist residents, families, and staff to obtain the highest quality of care for the resident.

On February 16th, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Area Agency on Aging-Ombudsman Program graduated another class of 18 Certified Volunteer Ombudsmen (CVO).

The Ombudsmen staff treated the newly certified volunteers to a breakfast, where they received their badges and certificates. The new CVOs were assigned facilities within their respective areas.

The Ombudsman staff has actively been recruiting volunteers by using local newspapers, presentations and local media. Another class will take place sometime in the latter part of March.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact your local Managing Staff Ombudsman, Debra Lachico at 1-800-365-6131 or dlachico@lrgvdc.org.



Certified Ombudsman Graduation Breakfast: (left to right) Ninfa Perez, Maria G. Cruz, Guillermina Hernandez, Maria Herrera, Lizbeth Bautista, Molly Segovia, Staff Ombudsman, Teresa De La Fuente, Diana Enriquez, Staff Ombudsman, Soraida Herrera, Susan Lerma, Irasema Alvarado, Silvestre Valle Jr., not pictured, Maria D. Valle, Rick Espinoza, Delma Espinoza, Steven Cantu, and Maria G. Enriquez.