

South Plains Association of Government Newsletter

Regional Forum

Inside this issue:

City of Ralls Community Storm Shelter	2
Rick Rhodes from TDA Visits SPAG	2
Levelland Opens New Rail park	3
New Commu- nity Training Center in City of Wolf- forth	3
New Employ- ees at SPAG	4
South Plains Citizen Corp Celebration	4
SPAG Quar- terly Calen- dar	6

**Commissioner Jones Elected President of The Texas Association of Regional Councils, Receives Award**

San Antonio, Texas: Patti Jones, Lubbock County Commissioner, Precinct 4, was recently honored by the Texas Association of Regional Councils with the TARC 2010 Wilbur R. Dunk Award in recognition of her dedication to the purposes and possibilities for regional cooperation through councils of government in Texas.



*Newly Elected TARC President Patti Jones with Immediate Past-President Terry Henley, Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Meadows Place.*

At the Inaugural Brunch during the association's 2010 Annual Conference on Regionalism, held in San Antonio September 15-17, Commissioner Jones was presented the award for her tireless dedication and support to regional councils.

Commissioner Jones was also sworn in as President of the statewide association of local governments for the upcoming 2010-2011 year. "The conference was an excellent forum to continue the discussion about bringing more efficiency to local governments through

regionalism," Patti Jones, TARC Board President and Lubbock County Commissioner said.

Almost 300 people attended the conference which included sessions on criminal justice, homeland security, 9-1-1 communications, transportation, energy, human resources, economic development, and programs for older adults.

"It is quite an honor for the South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG) and the region that one of our board members is serving as the President of a prestigious statewide organization such as TARC," Tim Pierce, executive director

of SPAG said. "It is also a testament to Commissioner Jones' reputation and standing in TARC.

She is seen as honest, hard working, and a person of integrity."Through strong partnerships with all levels of government, be they national, state or local, councils of government in Texas help plan for this vast state's varied regions and worked cooperatively to provide services to its citizens.

*\*Source: Ginny Lewis*



### City of Ralls Builds Community Storm Shelter With FEMA Funding

The City of Ralls received a grant for \$482,771.00 through FEMA and the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) to construct an above-ground storm shelter in their community.

This main construction phase of this project was completed in the summer of 2008 and the project closed out in September 2009. With this project, the City of Ralls now has a shelter that is approximately 2,745

square feet. This facility will hold 24% of the population of Ralls and 100% of Ralls High

an Emergency Operations Center, or EOC room that will house emergency equipment, maps, radios and information that can be used by emergency personnel.

Severe weather and specifically tornadoes were identified in the South Plains Regional Mitigation Action Plan as a significant threat to the region.

Several years ago a tornado impacted several facilities in the Ralls area causing extensive damage to numerous buildings. The above-ground shelter design was selected based on research done at Texas Tech University as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).



Storm Shelter during construction



L-R, Elena Quintanilla, NADO Representative, Mary Beth Sims

School and Middle School students. The storm shelter was constructed in the center of town with easy access for schools, businesses and city offices. Aside from physically protecting citizens during an emergency, this facility will also be the lifeline for the community should any disaster occur. The City of Ralls storm shelter has



Project site before construction



Project site during construction

**This facility will hold 24% of the population and 100% of Ralls High School and Middle School students."**

### Texas Department of Agriculture Assistant Commissioner Rick Rhodes Visits SPAG

SPAG welcomed Rick Rhodes, Assistant Commissioner with the Texas Department of Agriculture on October 27th.

Mr. Rhodes visited SPAG to meet with staff in the Regional Services and Economic Development



L-R: Tim Pierce, SPAG Executive Director, Nancy Cordero, TDA Rural Economic Development and Rick Rhodes, TDA

Departments to discuss various TDA programs that are at work in the SPAG Region.

Mr. Rhodes discussed the success SPAG has had with various TDA programs such as the Downtown Revitalization Program (DRP), Texas Capital Fund—Infrastructure and Main Street Programs, and how to better improve these programs for the SPAG region.



## City of Levelland Opens New Rail park

The City of Levelland recently brought to a close an \$8.6 million rail park project that will create jobs and bring revenue and new economic developments to the area. A celebratory ceremony was held on one of the windiest days in recent history, but more than 70 people braved the weather to see the ribbon cutting for this monumental development. Instead of scissors, the ribbon was cut by a passenger train, on which attendees enjoyed lunch.

The new Levelland rail park is housed on a 300 acre site that is connected to 18 different lots, each spanning from 5 to 65 acres in size. These lots will allow businesses to construct facilities almost adjacent to the rail



way, providing easy and cost effective access for large shipped goods.

The project was paid for by \$1.5 million in cash by the Levelland Economic Development Corp., and \$3.3 million in federal stimulus funding. Bond

sales constituted the remaining balance, which will be paid for by sales tax revenues and tax increment financing district funds.

Elgin Conner, Chairman of the Levelland Economic Development Corp., commented on the project by saying that the decision to build the rail was just as vital as the City's decision to build South Plains College.

It is estimated that for every job that is created through the rail park, 4.5

jobs will likely be created in the community. This caliber of economic development promises to provide for continued prosperity in the City of Levelland, and the South Plains areas as a whole.

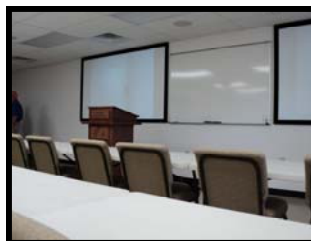


***“The new Levelland rail park is housed on a 300 acre site that is connected to 18 different lots, each spanning from 5 to 65 acres in size.”***

## New Community Training Center in City of Wolfforth

The City of Wolfforth hosted the opening of a Community Training Facility on Thursday, October 28th.

The new facility was at one time the home of Wolfforth City Hall, but has since been renovated



and redesigned to provide a training facility for firemen and other public employees.

Darrell Newsom, Wolfforth City Manager de-

livered a presentation on the new facility, and gave credit to all of the individuals who were instrumental in its redesign.

In the face of limited funding for the project, several city workers dedicated their time and effort in the reconstruction process.



## New Employees @ SPAG

### Tandi Townsend

joined the Regional Services Department as a Program Specialist in September. As a Program Specialist in Regional Services, Tandi will be responsible for assisting in grant writing process as well as maintaining all Census data.

Outside of SPAG, Tandi enjoys being around friends and family. She is looking forward to furthering her knowledge and learning more about the Regional Services Department at SPAG. Tandi graduated from Texas Tech University in August 2010 and previously worked at the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance.



### Christian Shotts

joined the Regional Services Department as a Program Specialist in late September. As a Program Specialist in this department, Christian is responsible for administration of CDBG Grants through the Texas Department of Rural Affairs, and also works as the Solid Waste Coordinator for the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

Outside of SPAG, Christian is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration. When not occupied by school projects, he enjoys reading philosophy, playing with his German Shepherd, and trying to improve how things around him function (but usually ends up breaking them.)

## South Plains Citizen Corp Program Celebration

The Homeland Security Unit celebrated yet another successful year for the South Plains Citizen Corp Program. The theme which was "The Night of the Shinning Stars", was held on September 11 of this year at the Oakwood United Methodist Church. The evening was dedicated to honor volunteers for their role in emergency response and community service. In dark moments, during an emergency, volunteers may be the first responders to an incident and help people with physical or psycho-

logical first aid.

The keynote speaker for the special event was the Honorable Alberto Gonzales, Former U.S. Attorney General, who spoke about Military Forces



L-R. Judge Alberto Gonzalez, Rosalyn Martinez (SPAG), Ben Gonzalez (Radio KEJS)

and their volunteer service to protect America. Colleen O'Neal Regional Liaison Officer spoke on the need to recognize the voluntary service of Citizen Corps members and their accomplishments throughout the year 2010.

Radio personality Ben Gonzalez KEJS Power Talk was Master of Ceremonies.

The volunteer of the year was Cindy Jenkins from the City of Plainview. The CERT Team for the year was from Hockley County. All were recognized for their outstanding commitment and service to their local community and to the South Plains Region.



L-R, Pauline Carresalez-Wilson (Neighborhood Watch Vol. Director.), Brian Frieda, South Plains Citizen Corp Chair, Rosalyn Martinez (SPAG)



**January 2010 Calendar**

ACoA (Advisory Council on Aging)	18th	2:00 pm	SPAG Board-room
Government Application Review Committee (GARC) Meeting	26th	10:00 am	SPAG Board Room
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting	6th	10:00 am	SPAG Board Room
Directors and Bookkeepers Meeting	20th	2:00 pm	SPAG Board Room



**February 2010 Calendar**

Government Application Review Com-	23rd	10 am	SPAG Board-
Advisory Council on Aging	16th	2-4 pm	SPAG Board-
9-1-1 Advisory Meeting	17th	10 am	SPAG Board-

**March 2010 Calendar**

Government Application Review Committee (GARC) Meeting	30th	10 am	SPAG Board-room
Texas Municipal League Region 3 (TML) Quarterly Meetings	TBD	TBD	TBD

*In the depth of winter,  
I finally learned  
that within me  
there lay an  
invincible  
summer.*

*- Albert Camus*

*SPAG is a voluntary association created by the local governments within State Planning Region 2. It is an independent political subdivision of the state and is one of 24 such organizations in Texas. All local governments in the region are eligible and invited to become a member. Regional Forum is published monthly by SPAG and is available without cost.*

