



South District



Making a Difference... ...in Zapata County

District Extension Newsletter for Commissioners' Courts in South Texas

Vacant

**Agriculture &
Natural Resources**

Dear Court Members,
In 2007, Texas Cooperative Extension celebrated the 100th anniversary of the County Extension Agent and of the Texas 4-H Program. In 2008, we launched a new strategic initiative that included a name change to AgriLife Extension. I want to thank you for your continued support of Extension and its many programs. I hope you find this newsletter helpful in updating you about the difference Extension education is making in Zapata County and the public benefits these differences mean economically, socially, and environmentally to the community. We feel strongly that these preventive, educational approaches to community issues provide present and long term value to the County and its residents. Again, thank you for your support and please call whenever we may be of service.

Dr. Ruben J. Saldaña
District Extension Administrator

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Extension met with local community members to recruit volunteers to serve on the Zapata County Leadership Advisory Board. The LAB also conducted a needs assessment on relevant educational issues in Zapata County. The LAB identified youth development, agricultural literacy and natural resource conservation primary issues.

The county Extension agent in collaboration with the Zapata County Chamber of Commerce served as an advisor and assisted a local group of cattle ranchers and landowners to identify and meet with critical governmental agencies and personnel who are involved in the eradication of the Texas Fever Tick. The county Extension agent also assisted the group in determining current and possible economic losses due to the fever tick.

The county Extension agent served as an advisor to the Zapata County Economic Strategic Plan and the Tourism Local Work group to assist in identifying local ecotourism and community development issues. The local work group consulted with an engineering firm to create a design for the proposed remodeling of the current Zapata County Public Library and add other educational facets to this facility such as the Zapata County World Birding Center and the Zapata County Historical Heritage Center.



THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EXTENSION CENTER AT WESLACO

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4-H & Youth Development

The county Extension agent met with local 4-H and Boys and Girls club members to recruit volunteers to serve on the Zapata County Youth Board. The Youth Board conducted a needs assessment session on pertinent issues affecting youth in Zapata County. The group identified youth pregnancy, agricultural literacy, and college career awareness as important topics. Zapata County 4-H community club enrollment increase by approximately 30% from 160 to 230 members during 2007. The county Extension agent conducted a 4-H Volunteer Training during the summer of 2007 with 12 participants to provide volunteer base with knowledge of club management, best financial management practices, 4-H project areas, new 4-H opportunities, ideal 4-H club meeting, and other 4-H topics.

- Recruited volunteers to form a new Zapata County 4-H Horse Club.
- Held annual 4-H Awards Banquet at Zapata County Fair Pavilion.
- Have 3 4-H Livestock Show entries for the 2008 San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo.
- Promoted several 4-H Livestock Prospects Shows in South Texas. Had local 4-H members attend and place throughout South Texas.
- Attended the 2007 Texas County Agricultural Agents Association Conference to represent Zapata County among fellow Extension personnel.
- Collaborated with Zapata County Independent School District to be recognized as 4-H Adjunct faculty to allow county 4-H program to be recognized as an extra-curricular activity.
- Collaborated with the Zapata County Fire Department to conduct 4-H club meeting educational programs on Emergency Awareness.



The new Zapata County youth facilities are impressive and will support hundreds of youth in the area with their projects.



2008 Educational Outreach

Education in Group Settings	
Number of Sessions	43
Number Contacts	2,603
Hrs Instruction	22,619
Education for Individuals	
Office Visits	57
Site Visits	3
Phone Consultation	36
Mail/Email	2

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2008 4-H Enrollment

Club Members	231
School Enrichment	1,213
Special Interests	20
Total Enrollment	1,464



ZAPATA COUNTY - ZAPATA