Centra Trainings Planned:

**Interpreting TCE to Elected Officials** Centra is scheduled for June 12, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Wil Galloway, Attorney/lobbyist in Austin will share helpful, practical approaches for interpreting our programs to elected officials. You need to register at [http://eit.tamu.edu/Centra.html](http://eit.tamu.edu/Centra.html) in order to participate in the Centra. If you have questions about registering contact EIT at 979-845-9689 or CentraHelp@ag.tamu.edu Don’t be left out of this excellent training.

Mark your calendar for **Managing Urban Volunteers** Centra on August 22, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. If you have topics that are of interest, let me know and we will try to address them in future Centra’s.

**National Urban Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri**

An excellent Urban Conference and Pre-Conference took place May 7-10, 2007 with 460 participants in Kansas City. Excellent workshops, speakers, resource sessions filled the week. Texas was well represented on the program: Dr. Chester Fehlis, Emeritus Director was keynote for the pre-conference; Connie Sheppard, CEA-FCS Bexar County and Janet Black, TAMUS-San Antonio gave a workshop on their P-16 Partnership program; and Bonnie McGee served on the planning committee.

Dr. Carl O’Conner, North Central Cooperative Extension Association Executive Director, spoke on partnerships as “an agreement to do something together that benefits all.” Four things he said that must be addressed for a true partnership are: shared authority; a joint investment of resources; mutual benefits; and shared risk, responsibility and accountability. His presentation was during the pre-conference focus of “Cooperative Extension – A Partner of Choice”. Are you?

**State Urban Program Advisory Committee To Be Named**

The TCE State Urban program focuses programming on the 81% of the population that lives in the Urban Initiative Counties. With such a large clientele, the urban program needs key voices from the cities to help convey the message of TCE program impact and importance to the people we serve. The three main purposes of the committee will be to:

* Serve as a spokesperson for Texas Cooperative Extension.
* Interpret Texas Cooperative Extension Urban Programs to key elected officials and other stakeholders.
* Identify and help secure new revenue streams for Texas Cooperative Extension.

The committee membership is being named and will have its first meeting in late June. It is an important committee for TCE and will be a guiding group for expanding our efforts for “Extension in the City.”
Spotlight on successful programs:

**Green Thumb Lecture Series – Harris County**
Texas Cooperative Extension and the Harris County Master Gardeners have launched a new set of gardening education programs, the Green Thumb Seminars. The Seminars are designed to provide residents with a solid foundation of home horticulture information, with topic selection based on common gardening questions.

The series idea started with former CEA-Hort, Sarah Lineberger in Fort Bend County. Because of its success it was adapted by Harris County to meet the needs of working people. The free evening seminars are held once a month and last two and ½ hours for an in-depth grasp of the topic. The topics mirror the Master Gardener program and are a great alternative for people looking for good information, but do not have the time to commit to the volunteer service component.

Speakers are Master Gardeners and the CEA-Hort, which keeps costs to a minimum and allows Master Gardeners to share what they’ve learned with others. The first year in 2006, an average of 30+ people attended each session. This year the program has expanded to two locations, and future plans are to hold the series in each of the four precincts simultaneously each year. Since urbanites tend to utilize services close to their home, Harris County sees a need to “go to them”. In order to reach this goal, more Master Gardener Speakers are being trained and efforts to secure more local resources are underway in order to reach more Harris County residents.

*Contact: Dr. Carol Brouwer, County Extension Agent – Horticulture, Harris County*

**Ag In The Bag – Lubbock County**
The Lubbock County staff partner with the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce Ag Committee and several other agencies to conduct the “Ag in the Bag” youth agricultural awareness event targeting area 4th graders. Held at Texas Tech University, participants included 1,245 students and 126 teachers/chaperones. They saw interactive presentations about: food science, cotton, sorghum, wheat, peanuts, corn, dairy, beef, and soil/water, and then had sack lunches, milk, and ice cream made from the various commodities.

The on-site evaluation indicated that all 55 teachers (100%) felt their students benefited from “Ag in the Bag” and all would recommend it to others. 44% already implemented agriculture in their classroom, while 47% stated they would implement agricultural lessons in the future. When the 55 teachers were asked what ways students benefit from the experience, 35 agreed that the program increases awareness of agriculture/science and 15 agreed that the program makes connections to classroom learning.

*Contact: Mark Brown, CEA-Ag, Lubbock County*