Centra Training on Interpreting TCE to Elected Officials
June 12, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Speaker: Wil Galloway
Mr. Galloway is a lobbyist/attorney in Austin and will share helpful, practical approaches to use in interpreting our programs to elected officials at the county/state/federal level. When Governor Perry was Ag Commissioner, Mr. Galloway was his Chief Legal Counsel, and he was also Chief of Staff for Todd Staples when he was in the Senate. Mark the date and time for a very informative presentation!

A new book that gives some tips on making yourself heard by elected officials, “Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear” is worth the read. The author, Frank Luntz, is a leading political pollster and consultant. An example of one of his tips: “Start with simplicity: If you can’t say it in two-syllable words, it’s probably too long and too complicated. Your job is not to sound sophisticated; your job is to be effective.”

Urban Professional Development Opportunity
In the fall, 2007, the pilot for an Urban Professional Development Opportunity will be implemented. The purpose of the opportunity is to afford agents potentially interested in a future career move into an urban or urban initiative county, to participate in a two week professional development internship in order to evaluate a career move and its possibilities.

Karen Tellman, Wheeler County in District 1, will participate in Travis County under the direction of County Extension Director Jeff Ripley.

Ricky Thompson, Jasper County in District 5, will participate in Fort Bend County under the direction of County Extension Director Vince Mannino.

Both will share their Urban Professional Development Opportunity experiences with all of us after they complete their two weeks.
2006 Urban Ag Literacy Program Impact Results

Across urban Texas, Extension is using hands-on learning to enhance young Texans understanding of science in their everyday lives. Each of the seven urban counties in Texas provides an annual ag literacy event. These events include: Pizza Ranch; Food and Fiber Expo; Kids and Kows and More; Ag Fair; AG’tivity Day; and Kids Day at the County Fair. They share mutual objectives:

1. Enhanced appreciation of the strength and stability of the Texas food and fiber system in everyday life.
2. Increased understanding of the Texas food and fiber system.
3. Increased understanding of the close relationship between the Texas food and fiber system to personal health.

In 2006, common evaluation questions were used at ag literacy events across urban Texas with the following results:

Of 1558 urban youth responding to the self-reported evaluation instrument:

- 75% learned more about the importance of food and fiber in their lives.
- 75% learned more about the origination of agricultural products.
- 78% learned more about milk and dairy cows.
- 77% learned more about vegetables and how they grow and what parts to eat.
- 71% learned more about meat animals.
- 83% learned more about the close relationship between food and fiber and human health.

In 2007-08, the ag literacy evaluation will be done again and an environmental evaluation will be done with a set of common questions for environmental programs throughout urban Texas.
Spotlight on successful programs:

East Region Urban Agents: East Region RPD, Susan Ballabina, reports that several East Region Urban Agents are piloting a new Master Wellness Volunteer Program. Urban pilot agents include: Donna Rodriquez, Dallas; Dana Tarter, Tarrant; Carrie Brazeal, Collin; Lexie McGrane, Denton; Linda Fuchs, Bell; and Maggie Johnson, Williamson. These agents recruited more than 50 volunteers who received 40 hours of health and nutrition education. In return, the volunteers have agreed to give back 40 hours of service to the FCS program. Agents are now in the process of monitoring and managing the volunteers. At the end of the year, the regional program development committee will analyze results and make plans for phase two of the pilot program. The ultimate goal is to create a master wellness volunteer program that will be available to all urban agents interested in enhancing county program efforts through the use of volunteers.

Contact: Susan Ballabina, RPD-FCS, East Region

North Region Population Center Conference
The North Region Population Center Conference, “Strategies for Even More Success,” was developed last year to promote program strategies and share tools to enhance educational program success in the more populated counties. Objectives of the conference held in Wichita Falls included:

- Address teaching methodology in program areas to identify innovative and effective population center program models.
- Provide a forum for Extension professionals representing an extended range of educational activities relevant to population center audiences.
- Increase volunteer development by exploring effective volunteer recruitment, training, retention, and recognition in population center counties.
- Improve visibility through effective mass media marketing strategies.

The conference featured a variety of educational strategies, including concurrent sessions for program areas featuring a successful CEA in Urban counties sharing strategies that had been used successfully. The RPD’s and Extension Program Specialist also shared additional resources during the sessions. Jeff Crilley, Emmy Award Winning Reporter from Dallas, was the wrap up speaker with a presentation on “Free Publicity.” The conference was a tremendous success and will be repeated every other year in an effort to share successes and challenges facing the population center counties in the state.

Contact: North Region Regional Program Directors and District Extension Administrators