

Texas Tourism Week May 13-21

In recognition of the Texas travel industry and its important contribution to the economy of Texas, Gov. Rick Perry has proclaimed May 13-21, Texas Tourism Week.

Texans are encouraged to be tourists in Texas where they will find exciting travel destinations in the Lone Star State's bustling big cities to its charming small towns.

From the top of the Panhandle Plains to the tip of South Texas and from the piney woods of East Texas to the mountains of the Big Bend Region, everything from unique historical and cultural attractions to scenic natural wonders attracts Texas travelers.

Tourism has long been recognized as an economic development tool that generates revenue and jobs for Texas.

In 2004, travelers generated \$44.4

billion in direct travel spending and the travel industry employed 491,000 Texans. Texas is one of the most visited states in the United States.

"The Texas travel industry is of vital importance to our state's economic growth," said Julie Chase, Tourism Director, Officer of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism (EDT).

Texans can celebrate Tourism Week by traveling in Texas, visiting a new museum exhibit, or enjoying a local festival.

Remember to acknowledge the travel industry employees and volunteers you meet in your travels as they help make tourism a thriving industry for Texas.

"Tourism Week is a time when we remind folks of the fabulous opportunities for fun and interesting

travel in Texas," Paul Serff, president and CEO, Texas Travel Industry Association.

Cities throughout the Lone Star State are taking this opportunity to recognize the importance of tourism in their communities by hosting celebratory activities and recognition ceremonies.

"We encourage Texans to participate in the many Tourism Week activities and to take advantage of the wonderful Texas hospitality at area hotels, resorts, bed and breakfasts, and guest ranches," Scott Joslove, president and CEO, Texas Hotel & Lodging Association.

For a complete list of these activities and to find out more about all the vacation destinations and travel events in Texas, visit www.TravelTexas.com.

USDA Announces Research Funds

Bryan Daniel, USDA Rural Development State Director, today announced approximately \$495,000 in competitive funds available to institutions of higher learning to conduct research on the economic impact of

4-H'ers In District, State Events

Colorado County 4-H members have been active in District 11 events during the month of April. Lauren Trojacek and Jacob Weishuhn gave and educational presentation in the Health category at District Roundup. Roundup was held April 8 in Port Lavaca.

Lauren and Jacob place second in the Senior division and advanced to State Roundup which will be held at Texas A&M on June 5-9. Congratulations and Good Luck, Lauren and Jacob.

Nine 4-H members participated in the Multi-District Judging contest Saturday, April 22 at Texas A&M. The Junior Team of Jacob Valenta, Keegan Vincent, Bonnie Winkler and Lane Hasse placed fourth in their division of Livestock Judging.

Jacob was the second high overall individual and Keegan was the second high in beef judging in the Junior Division. Dylan Hasse, Luke Krischke, Kylee Werland and Sam Winkler received a blue award in the Intermediate Division of Livestock Judging and Cody Valenta judged as an individual in the Senior Division of Livestock Judging. Congratulations Judging Team!

Shooting Sports Club members participated in the Shooting Sports Extravaganza in Brownwood on April 21-22.

Cody Henneke placed first in shotgun and Adam Rebel placed fourth. In the air pistol division, Alicia Jurek placed first and Jaelyn Jacobs placed second. Congratulations!

Several members of the Shooting Sports Club will be participating in the District 11 Rifle meet scheduled for April 28-29 in Victoria. Good Luck to these 4-Hers!

Drought Plan Saves Water

The LCRA Board approved changes to the LCRA Water Utilities Drought Contingency Plan to eliminate wasteful water uses.

The changes will require LCRA's retail water utility customers to repair or replace faucets, pipes, valves or sprinkler heads that may be broken or leaking.

Customers also need to ensure that any watering system or equipment is operating properly and does not allow water to run off the property or to pond in a street or parking lot.

LCRA staff says the new restrictions, which will be in effect throughout the year, could reduce or eliminate the need for voluntary or mandatory watering restrictions.

The cities of San Antonio and Austin, along with other Texas communities, have similar restrictions in effect.

The Board also approved staff's request for greater flexibility in setting whatever watering restrictions may be necessary during a drought or water emergency.

cooperatives. "Rural communities in Texas benefit from the involvement of local cooperatives," said Daniel.

"These funds will enable USDA Rural Development to determine how cooperative businesses contribute to the economic growth of communities."

The competitive funds will be used to establish cooperative research agreements with institutions to examine the impact of cooperatives, in cooperation with USDA Rural Development.

Each agreement will include guidance on the development of a methodology for collecting and assembling basic impact data; applying the methodology to collect data and analyze the economic impact of cooperatives and other appropriate studies to examine the socio-economic impact of cooperatives on local communities. Projects must be completed by Sept. 30, 2008.

Potential applicants are institutions of higher education; public or private colleges or universities; research foundations maintained by a college or university or private nonprofit organizations funded by a group of colleges or universities.

Application forms, guides and materials for the cooperative agreement

can be found at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coop/reic.htm or by contacting USDA Rural Development at (202) 690-0368; TDD: (800) 877-8339.

Paper applications must be received in the USDA Rural Development National Office, postmarked no later than June 30, electronic applications to be received by same deadline date via www.grants.gov.

For more information, go to www.rurdev.usda.gov/ and click on Available Funds.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural communities.

As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested more than \$63 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure.

More than 1.1 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments.

Further information on Business and Cooperative Programs is available by calling the Texas State Office at 254-742-9780 or by visiting us at www.rurdev.usda.gov/.

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