

Sample Media Release

EXTENSION'S FUTURES FORUM WILL HELP TEXANS SPEAK TO THE FUTURE

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Are Texans ready to meet the challenge of change? Will their individual and collective efforts to answer local needs result in healthy, sustainable and prosperous communities?

The answer is “yes”—with the right amount of cooperative, proactive planning. That's the goal of this year's Texas Community Futures Forum, a statewide project of Texas Cooperative Extension.

“The Futures Forum will bring local residents, government, business and other groups together in a ‘town-hall’ type atmosphere to identify local needs, issues and problems,” said Jett Major, district Extension administrator in Lubbock. “It is a unique opportunity for individuals and groups to join hands to improve their communities and the state as a whole.”

This process is not new to Texas Cooperative Extension, an agency of The Texas A&M University System.

“The first Futures Forum was held in 1999, but we’ve brought local residents into our long-range planning efforts since 1985,” said Dr. Chester Fehlis of College Station, Extension director. “Throughout our history, input from local people has helped us to determine how Extension can best serve the educational needs of the community. The Futures Forum process has brought greater diversity and new partnerships and cooperation into our planning.”

“Extension agents and other trained facilitators will conduct the statewide County Forums this spring in all 254 Texas counties,” Fehlis added.

The County Forums will generate a priority list of community-wide issues and needs. Each community’s list will be posted on the Internet for county government, state agencies and other organizations to review and use when formulating their strategic plans. The statewide list of priority needs and issues also will serve as an important part of Extension's long-range outreach education plan for 2005-2008.

“The results from the Texas Community Futures Forum will help us and our partners to focus our activities on solutions,” Fehlis said. “The Futures Forum will facilitate individual, joint and coordinated action to deliver results that will truly make a difference in the lives of Texans.”

More information about the Texas Community Futures Forum is available on the Internet at <http://futuresforum.tamu.edu>.