



Become A Member

Upcoming Events

Communities Working Together to Accomplish What One Community Cannot Do Alone

The **E—Update**



***The world is a book - and those who do not travel read only one page.
St. Augustine***

Texas Midwest Region Ready for Summer Road Trips

The [2021 Visitors Guide](#) has been delivered to each of the Texas Travel Centers, all the Harley-Davidson Dealerships in Texas, and each of the visitors centers across our region and beyond. In addition to these locations, we are working to get the guide to RV sales/distributors and the larger RV Parks as well. If you know of a RV park that would like our guide, please call or email us the information.

Also, if your community doesn't have this incredible travel resource on your shelf or you are one of our member communities and need a new supply, give us a call at 325-795-8626 and will get them to you!



Also, check our [Facebook Page](#)! We recently completed our 52-community member tour and captured amazing photos of the sites and attractions unique to our part of Texas. Join the over 4,700 followers of our page and be sure to invite your family and friends to join you.

Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk...



Well, there's no denying there are some "big shoes" sitting in the office right now. As the picture might denote, I have had them on the wrong feet, trying to go every direction at once, tripping over the laces (fortunately this one is figurative), etc. However, one month into "filling" my responsibilities as the new Executive Director, I can say that this is truly an incredible organization. The support, education, awareness, and commitment TMCN has to its members is BIG, too! Moving toward our 27th year, it is my heartfelt desire to continue on the path forged by a handful of people in 15 communities that had a vision

for what our unique, rural area needed to succeed, both as individual communities and as a larger, stronger region.

I am equally honored and thrilled to be "filling the shoes" of Kathy Keane, who did her own filling of some pretty big shoes. Yet what I have already learned, and I know Kathy did as well...that its not the shoes of the person leaving that we strive to fill. It's the shoes of the individuals that make up our members that are the important shoes. Making sure that *those* shoes have all that they need to do what they have committed to do for their communities. And that is what makes TMCN such an asset to us all, and why I will be working diligently to keep my feet to the path...in my own unique shoes.



Live and In Person and Coming to an Awe-Inspiring Location near you

July Membership Meeting July 29



Our July Membership Meeting will be held at the [West Texas Rehab Center in Abilene](#). We will be touring this awe-inspiring facility and enjoying some real-time networking during lunch.

The key topic for the July meeting will be moving forward in an "open" Texas. We know that even though Texas has been open since March 2021, there is still much to be aware of regarding health, wellness and respect for all. Our guest speaker will be Quang Ngo. Quang is President/CEO of the TORCH Foundation and Executive Vice President of TORCH (Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals). Come hear Quang speak regarding the impact of the COVID Pandemic on our personal and professional lives and the valuable lessons learned in the process. The meeting will end with a tour of the WTRC facility and the incredible work they are doing in the areas of adult and pediatric therapy, employer services, orthotics and prosthetics, audiology, and family support services.

Mark your calendars today

July 29, 2021 11:30-3pm
West Texas Rehab Center
4601 Hartford St. Abilene, TX 79605

Thank you West Texas Rehab Center - newest TMCN Champion Partner and host for this Membership Meeting

Leadership TMCN - Developing Community and Inspiring Youth



This year there are four schools participating in the TMCN Leadership Program. And as noted last month - a sincere Thank You goes out to the leadership represented by the [Snyder Chamber of Commerce](#), [City of Baird](#), [Breckenridge Chamber of Commerce](#) and [Coleman Economic Development Corporation](#) for believing in your young leaders of

tomorrow! For the next four months we will highlight each group of students and their projects. And for the month of June, we will highlight Coleman.

Operation Restoration-The Coleman Leadership TMCN class of Gus Allen, Denver Hunter, Emily Taylor and Carlie Tibbetts have adopted the 1928 American LaFrance Ladder Truck as their project and they are requesting the community and county to help make this very special project a reality. The students are collaborating with the Coleman Fire/Volunteer Fire Department, the MKB Foundation, Coleman EDC and the City of Coleman as well as other community partners. They have already initiated a few good fundraisers and working hard toward their financial goal. The

students are excited and encouraged at the interest and strong community support their project has created.

Thank you Kim Little, Coleman EDC for this update.

UPDATE: Newly Elected Officials Seminar July 13, 2021

TMCN and the West Central Texas Council of Governments will again co-host this year's Newly Elected Officials Seminar on Tuesday, July 13th. The event will be held in the large conference room of the COG offices located at 3702 Loop 322 in Abilene.

The agenda and speakers have been set and include:



PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE/OPEN MEETINGS ACT: Justice John Bailey, 11th Court of Appeals, Eastland

MAKING DOLLARS COUNT IN YOUR BUDGET: Diana Lopez, City Manager, City of Coleman

MAXIMIZING YOUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POWER: Terra New, Operations Manager and Kelly Cheek, Director of Economic Development, WCTCOG

LUNCH – GUEST SPEAKER: Texas State Representative Glenn Rogers, House District 60

ETHICS AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS: Jeff Betty, Attorney, Practicing in Criminal Law, Government, Law Enforcement, Construction Law and Zoning

EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS EQUAL SUCCESS: Emily Crawford, City Manager & Mayor Steven Haynes, City of Brownwood

DEVELOPING VIABLE COMMUNITIES– THE BENEFITS OF GRANTS: Larissa Place, Field Representative, TX Dept. of Agriculture and Rachel Hering, Director, Keep Texas Recycling – Keep Texas Beautiful

The cost of the seminar is \$25/person and includes lunch and refreshments. The focus is to provide valuable information for newly elected mayors and city councilmembers but is also a great resource and refresher for current mayors, city councilmembers, city managers and other city officials. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

Digital Texas Coalition Making Great Strides in the Legislative Session

The 87th Regular Legislative Session was a remarkable one for broadband and connectivity initiatives. Below is a look at significant legislation that passed:

1. Organizing Texas to Close the Digital Divide

- [HB 5 \(Ashby/Nichols\)](#): The omnibus broadband legislation that creates a state broadband program with necessary functions led



by the Comptroller to expand broadband connectivity in Texas, including:

- A state broadband office to coordinate broadband initiatives across the state;
- A state broadband plan informed by all sectors that establishes long-term goals and provides a strategic framework for broadband connectivity;
- A state broadband map that identifies areas with and without broadband access that will inform funding decisions made by the state; and
- A dedicated fund for broadband initiatives; and a program to help fund broadband infrastructure projects.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- [SB 1 \(Nelson/Bonnen\)](#): The General Appropriations Act, which appropriates \$248.5 billion in All Funds for the 2022-23 biennium, including \$5.0 million in General Revenue for the creation of the state broadband development office and to carry out duties such as, the development of a state broadband plan and broadband coverage maps.
 - Status: Pending Governor action

The creation and funding of these functions improves the positioning of Texas to capitalize and properly invest the hundreds of millions of federal funds Texas will receive for broadband connectivity.

2. Digital Inclusion

- [HB 5 \(Ashby/Nichols\)](#): The omnibus broadband legislation requires the state broadband office and the state broadband plan to include digital literacy and skilling initiatives; also authorizes the broadband development fund to be used for digital literacy and skilling.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- [SB 1 \(Nelson/Bonnen\)](#): Expands the use of workforce program funding in state budget to include digital literacy and skilling. Provides \$3.75 million to the Texas State Library and Archives (TSLAC) to support digital inclusion and workforce initiatives.
 - Status: Pending Governor action

3. Online and Digital Learning/Student Connectivity

- [HB 5 \(Ashby/Nichols\)](#): The omnibus broadband legislation requires the broadband coverage maps to include the connectivity status of each public school and pre-school; projects that connect public schools and institutions of higher education will be prioritized under the state broadband development funding program.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- [HB 3261 \(Huberty/Taylor\)](#): Implements the transition plan for electronic assessment that was set in motion last session. Last session, the Legislature passed HB 3906 directing TEA to study the feasibility of electronic assessment of STAAR and develop a plan. HB 3261 includes a temporary matching grant to ensure schools are prepared for electronic testing for the next biennium. Additionally, the bill allows districts to spend funds from the Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment on internet connectivity and training for online assessment.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- [SB 226 \(Paxton/Lozano\)](#): Adds instruction in virtual learning and virtual instruction practices to educator preparation programs. This training must cover best practices in assessing students receiving virtual instruction and developing a virtual learning curriculum.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- [HB 1525 \(Huberty/Taylor\)](#): Omnibus education legislation that includes provisions requiring the Texas Education Agency to provide broadband technical support for student connectivity, and expands the use of the Technology Instructional Materials Allotment to include costs associated with distance learning.
 - Status: Pending Governor action

- [SB 1 \(Nelson/Bonnen\)](#): The General Appropriations Act, which appropriates \$248.5 billion in All Funds for the 2022-23 biennium, including:
 - Student Connectivity: \$398.0 million in Federal Funds, including \$390.0 million for the purposes of reimbursing schools for technology acquisitions and \$8.0 million to support schools in providing at-home broadband for students (related legislation: HB 1525 by Huberty/Taylor)
- Improving Online and Digital Learning: \$4.0 million in General Revenue to assist schools in developing and acquiring the necessary infrastructure to implement online assessments (related legislation: HB 3261 by Huberty/Taylor).
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- 4. Telehealth and Telemedicine**
 - [HB 4 \(Price/Buckingham\)](#): Makes permanent many of the emergency rules that were designed to remove regulatory barriers to telehealth access.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- 5. Middle Mile Broadband**
 - [SB 632 \(Buckingham/Buckley\)](#): Authorizes the Lower Colorado River Authority to provide wholesale middle mile broadband services to other internet service providers.
 - Status: Effective immediately
 - [HB 3853 \(Anderson/Perry\)](#): Authorizes transmission distribution utilities to provide wholesale middle mile broadband services to other internet service providers.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
- 6. Miscellaneous Items**
 - [SB 507 \(Nichols/Anderson\)](#): Balances the state highway ROW accommodations for any and all broadband providers.
 - Status: Pending Governor action
 - [HB 1505 \(Paddie/Hancock\)](#): Establishes guidelines related to pole accessibility and creates a pole replacement program at the Comptroller's office, which will reimburse entities for costs incurred from replacing poles associated with broadband development projects.
 - Status: Pending Governor action

These actions take great stride in preparing Rural Texans for the future. Please take the time to thank your Legislators for making these items a priority.

TMCN Membership Renewal Time is Here!

As many of you know, Texas Midwest Community Network is a grassroots 501(c)(6) non-profit organization. As such, we do not receive any funding from state or federal sources or private foundations. We are member-driven and member-supported through annual dues payments, event registrations, business partners, and our annual Texas Midwest Travel Guide. We know that many of you are struggling right now and carefully choosing how to budget available resources. As we have done in the past, Membership Renewals will be going out in early July for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. We trust that TMCN has and continues to bring value and benefit to you and your community. Know that we are here for our member communities and will continue to promote a regional approach, providing the resources, education and awareness for our members to achieve economic and community growth.



Governor Abbott, TDEM, TMD Expand Mobile Vaccine Program To Include Groups Of Five Or More Texans



Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), and the Texas Military Department (TMD) today announced the expansion of the State Mobile Vaccine Program to include groups of five or more Texans who voluntarily choose to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Texans can call 844-

90-TEXAS and select Option 3 to schedule a mobile vaccine clinic to vaccinate groups of friends, families, employees, volunteers, and more.

"The eligibility expansion for the State Mobile Vaccine Program will allow more Texans to get vaccinated against COVID-19," said Governor Abbott. "Vaccines are the most effective defense against this virus, and I urge groups of Texans who wish to get vaccinated as a business, family unit, friend group, or more to call 844-90-TEXAS to schedule a mobile vaccine clinic. By working together to get more shots in arms, we will continue to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in communities across the state." Previously, businesses or civic organizations were required to have 10 or more employees, visitors, or members who voluntarily choose to be vaccinated. Homebound Texans are still encouraged to call the hotline and select Option 1 to request a state mobile vaccination team to visit their home. The call center is open Monday-Saturday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Governor Abbott and TDEM originally launched the State Mobile Vaccine Pilot Program in January 2021 to ramp up COVID-19 vaccination efforts in underserved areas of Texas. Since the program's initial launch, the responsibilities of State Mobile Vaccine Teams have been expanded to meet various COVID-19 vaccination needs of communities across the state. These teams are made up of members of the Texas National Guard and coordinated by TDEM.

Partner Highlight - Hendrick Health System

Published by Abilene Reporter News - May 27, 2021



Hendrick Health on Thursday announced it would open a "shared service center" at the former Sears store at the east end of the Mall of Abilene. The 158,000-square foot site, to be known as Hendrick Service Center, will "provide a centralized accessible hub for patient services," according to a media release.

Renovations at the former store are due to begin in October, with a projected opening in November 2022. "By relocating existing administrative and retail services currently housed in and around our campuses, we can reallocate valuable space to expand clinical services for patients," said Brad Holland, president and CEO of Hendrick Health.

The health system acquired Abilene Regional Medical Center in 2020, and now operates hospitals in both north and south Abilene. There also are other medical facilities located throughout the city.

Services to be provided at mall will be:

- Billing/business services
- Medical records/release Information and health information management
- Hendrick Clinic Access Center, including physician scheduling and insurance verification
- Supply chain
- Print shop
- Warehouse/distribution center
- Human resources

- Professional education and development
- IT business applications

More more information about TMCN Patron Marketing Partner **Hendrick Health System**, [click here](#).^t

Job Openings

Looking for a career change? Check out the current opening throughout the region [here](#). Member community representatives who would like to have their job posted, please contact us at tmcn@tmcn.org.



Regional Career Changes

Here are a few career changes within our region you may have missed. We extend our best wishes to those accepting new positions or moving on to new opportunities.



[Gorman Economic Development Corporation](#) - [Audrey Johnston](#) [Gorman EDC](#)



Your Regional Resource Connection

We have worked diligently to bring you timely information and resources to assist you and your community in overcoming the challenges presented by COVID-19 and put you on a path to economic recovery.

If you have not already done so, please check out the **Resource & Links** under the **Members Tab** on our [website](#). This page is continually updated with the latest news, announcements and resources coming out of Washington, the Governor's Office, State agencies, and our vast base of local and regional community partners. You will also find contact information for various State agencies, National and State Legislators, Workforce and SBDC Offices.

We are also posting timely informational resources, sharing articles of interest, and links to informative webinars on our Facebook Page through our internal TMCN ListServ and on our [Facebook Page](#). We trust you have found this information timely and of value to you and your communities. Our promise to you is to continue to be diligent in keeping you abreast of the current news and events affecting our region.



July 7: Texas Downtown Association Summer Camp [Register here](#)

***July 13:** Newly Elected Officials Seminar, WCTCOG, FMI [Click Here](#)

July 13 & 14: Texas Rural Challenge (Virtual) [Register here](#)

***July 29:** TMCN Quarterly Membership Meeting, West Texas Rehab Center, Abilene, FMI [Click Here](#)

Aug 3-4: 2021 West Texas Legislative Summit, San Angelo TX [Click here to register](#)

***October 27:** Texas Midwest Annual Conference, Abilene Convention Center, FMI [Click Here](#)

July 30: Texas Downtown Awards Applications due [TDA website](#)

*** TMCN Event**

****FUNDING OPPORTUNITY** DEADLINE JULY 26, 2021**

USDA Seeks Applications for Placemaking Grants to Spur Economic Growth and Community Development in Rural America



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced it is accepting applications for eligible entities to provide planning, training and technical assistance to rural communities to foster placemaking activities.

[Read full stakeholder statement here.](#)



We Appreciate Our Partners!

The Marketing & Promotions Opportunities Program is one of the primary reasons for the continued success and sustainability of our organization.

We proudly promote and recognize our partners' unwavering support given not only to our organization as a whole but the 53 communities who make up Texas Midwest Community Network. We recognize and express our sincere gratitude for the longstanding and continued support of the following partners and, ask you, where possible, to demonstrate this appreciation by utilizing their services:

Champion: [Golden Spread Electric Cooperative](#) & [West Texas Rehabilitation Center](#)

Patrons: [Hendrick Health System](#), [Jacob|Martin](#), [Republic Services](#) & [Texas State Technical College](#)

Neighbors: [Atmos](#), [AT&T](#), [Center for Community Health & Development](#), [Enprotec/Hibbs & Todd](#), [Howard College-San Angelo](#), [Raise Your Hand Texas](#) & [Tolar](#)

[Systems](#)

Event Sponsors: [Abilene CVB](#), [Abilene Regional Airport](#), [Angelo State University SBDC-San Angelo](#), [Cisco College](#), [Coleman County Electric Cooperative](#), [Fullerton & Associates PLLC](#), [Oncor](#) & [Texas Tech University SBDC-Abilene](#)

Interested in becoming one of distinguished Marketing Partners? [Click Here](#) for more information and how your company can benefit!

Texas Midwest Community Network

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