

Communities Working Together to Accomplish What One Community Cannot Do Alone

The **E—Update**



"This is an unusual season in our lives-in Stamford, in Texas, in America, in the world. Many of us are experiencing hard times. Others are experiencing new joys amidst unusual circumstances. I'm thinking hard about answers for how our rural communities will move forward from COVID-19 and the associated effects on our economy. Many parts of our lives will never be the same. Some parts may be better, others may be worse, and still others may not be better or worse, just different. But above all, no matter what you're dealing with, whether it's the hour of pride or the depth of affliction, remember - this too shall pass."

James Decker, is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website.

Standing Together - #TMCN Strong

Like many of you, as the pandemic continues to impact our families, our businesses and our communities, I sometimes find myself overcome with feelings of despair and heartbreak realizing that it's been weeks since I've seen my extended family, shared lunch with a friend, or shopped at my favorite local business. Thankfully, those feelings are short-lived, not because those experiences are not still a priority for me, but because I continually see the act of

kindness and concern displayed so vibrantly across our region.

Thank you for sharing your community stories - from teacher parades and take-out-Tuesday promotions to bear hunts, chalk art contests and zoom coffee get-togethers, you are making a difference and lifting the spirits of your citizens. I truly believe we will come out stronger and better on the other side. As James Decker says, our lives may never be the same but I know without a doubt we will all come to truly appreciate the abundance of blessings in our lives - blessings that were too easily taken for granted just a few weeks ago.

Stand strong Texas Midwest Community Network - I'll be seeing you soon!
Kathy Keane, Executive Director, TMCN



STRIKE FORCE Seeks Input

As you may recall, TMCN has been honored to be part of a statewide rural practitioners collaborative focused on issues specific to rural. We have worked in earnest to provide timely input to legislators and state agencies and now have an opportunity to plan an significant part in the re-opening of Texas. We need the help of

our local business communities!

The collaborative was contacted late Tuesday, April 21st by Ariana Cruz, Executive Director for Economic Development and Tourism for the Office of the Governor. As you may know, she is part of the Governor's STRIKE FORCE and is compiling information from businesses which will greatly influence the decisions moving forward to re-open Texas.

The collaborative has been asked to solicit information from as many of our local businesses as possible. Unfortunately, we only have a short window to respond and be part the STRIKE FORCE's recommendation to the Governor. Your local community leaders have been forwarded the requested questionnaires to disseminate to respective businesses. They have been asked to return them to our offices via email at tmcn@tmcn.org by noon tomorrow, April 23rd. Again, we realize this is a short time frame as we are working to meet the STRIKE FORCE's deadline of 5:00 pm. Consolidating these reports are critical to assisting in the Governor's office efforts.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the TMCN Office via email at tmcn@tmcn.org or by phone at 325-703-1636. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this important response.

TMCN Resource Link

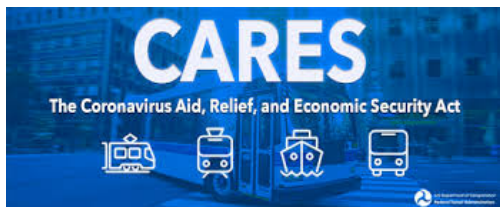
Since the beginning of the social distancing mandates, your Network has worked diligently to bring you timely information and resources to assist you and your community in overcoming the obstacles related to COVID-19.

If you have not already done so, please check out the **Resource Link** on our website at <https://tmcn.org/resources-links/>. This page is continually updated with the latest news and



announcements coming out of Washington, the Governor's Office, State agencies, and our vast base of local and regional community partners.

We are also posting reliable informational resources, sharing articles of interest, and links to valuable webinars on our Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/TexasMidwest/> and through our internal TMCN ListServ. We hope 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.



SBDCs Provide a Conduit to Funding

America's SBDCs have always been a valuable resource to small businesses through our region but are now playing an important role in working to help small businesses address the challenges

of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and to connect them to available SBA and CARES Act funding.

On April 9th TMCN hosted a webinar in partnership with the [Angelo State University SBDC - San Angelo](#) and the [Texas Tech University SBDC - Abilene](#). The webinar, titled "The CARES Act and Your Business", provided information on the processes and documents necessary to apply for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Payroll Protection Program (PPP).

A follow-up to this webinar will be scheduled within the next few weeks. Watch our [website](#) and [Facebook Page](#) for announcements. For more information on SBDC's COVID-19 available resources [click here](#).

Note: As was announced last week, the initial \$350B funding package has been exhausted. However, on Tuesday, April 21st, the Senate approved \$320 billion of additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program with \$60 billion earmarked for community banks and small lenders. The package also included an additional \$75 billion for hospitals (with a significant amount going to rural areas), \$25 billion to expand COVID-19 testing nationwide, and \$60 billion in emergency disaster loans and grants. The package now heads to the House where it is expected to pass on Thursday.

Thank you to TMCN Marketing Partner [Jacob & Martin](#) who hosted the webinar.

Leadership TMCN Goes Online

Session I of Leadership TMCN was held on April 15th via Zoom Meeting and was a resounding success. Facilitators [Kevin Tutt](#) and [Mike Daggs](#) once again brought enthusiasm and encouragement to mentors and students in spite of the potential obstacles which may occur due to COVID-19.

Teams met in private sessions with Kevin, Mike and Kathy to discuss their projects and offer advice to get the project to the finish line. Students were encouraged to continue the development of community partnerships by embracing virtual opportunities and thinking outside the box.

Communities participating in this year's class include Anson, Baird, Breckenridge, Coleman, Early, Haskell and Stamford.

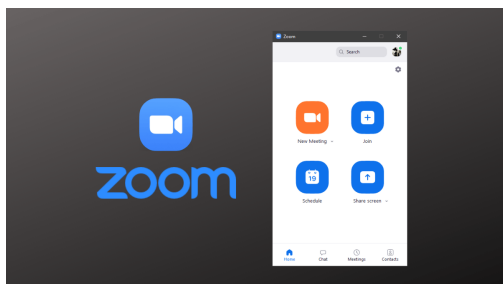
Project judging will be held on Wednesday, **September 19th** and will focus on five main criteria: Engagement (*who were your partners/volunteers*), Problem Solving (*how the project was affected by the pandemic*), Processes Used (*the strategy*), Results (*the effectiveness of*



Session II Zoom Meeting

the project, completion or steps taken to ensure completion), and Community Impact (citizens impact and the why of the project).

Tremendous thanks go to TMCN Marketing Partner [Jacob & Martin](#) who provided the technology which enabled us to host the session online.



TMCN to Host Quarterly Membership Meeting Virtually

We will be hosting our Quarterly Membership Meeting on **Thursday, April 30th** via Zoom Meeting from 1:30 - 3:00 pm.

Planned topics for our April meeting include presentations on TCEQ's Nuisance and Abandoned Building Landfills ("Monofills") Program and related Council of Governments Programs, The Value of Community Housing Studies, and Understanding Broadband. We will also hear from representatives of [Mentors Care](#) and [Raise Your Hand Texas](#) on the programs and services their respective organizations can offer our local communities.

NOTE: The current global conditions have made us acutely aware of the potential for more pressing matters of importance - Helping Small Business and Getting People Back to Work. We will be prepared to refocus the meeting as needed to provide timely responses and information requested by our members. Please watch for a short survey to be sent out later this week which will help us in reassessing current needs or feel free to send us an email to tmcn@tmcn.org.

We'll conclude the meeting with our ever popular roundtable discussions via Zoom breakouts. We encourage you to reach out to your fellow community leaders and invite them to participate in the meeting. We look forward to seeing you on April 30th.

A link to this meeting will be provided soon. Watch our [website](#) for additional details.

Celebrating Kindness and Community...

As was mentioned previously, there are many encouraging and inspiring stories and events coming out of the TMCN region. While we are sure there are many more we simply are not aware of, we wanted to highlight a few of them here...

Adopt-A-Senior (Eden)



In what was supposed to be the celebration of a major milestone in their lives, the 2020 Graduating Class has seen the entirety of their senior year cancelled. Many communities are not letting their success go unnoticed and are instituting an "Adopt-A-Senior" campaign. The [Eden Chamber of Commerce](#) is just one of these amazing organizations recognizing their Senior Class. Others we've noticed on social media include Hamlin and Merkel. We're sure there are many others!

Bring Your Mug Zoom (Early)

The [Early Chamber of Commerce](#) is not letting a little social distancing get in the way of networking. Every Friday morning, local business get together to share ideas, concerns or simply join the conversation. This past Friday, their guest was Bill Leaverton, new Regional Director for America's SBDC at Tarleton State University. What a great way to get together while working apart!



First Responders Celebrating Birthdays (Tye)



The [Tye Police Department and Volunteer Fire Department](#) have been lifting spirits and bringing smiles to the faces of children in a number of ways including preparing meals and delivering Easter baskets. In a new program, they are making birthdays extra special by doing birthday parades! One of the department's police officers has taken the celebration one step further and is making beautiful plaques for each birthday boy and girl.

Quarantine Scavenger Hunt (Eastland)

In a effort to create a little adventure and, in turn, support local business, the [Eastland Chamber of Commerce](#) is hosting a Eastland Quarantine Scavenger Hunt! Participants are encouraged to take a photo of things on a prepared list of items, post the photos to a online wall, and tag local businesses. The top 5 participants with the most items receive a free T-shirt & hat of their choice from the Chamber!



Partner Highlight: Oncor Article by The Wire



Earlier this month, Oncor announced \$1.7 million in donations to community non-profit organizations across their service territory that serve those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding will be focused on first responders, health care professionals and vulnerable or heavily impacted populations, such as seniors, children, homeless, and low-income or displaced workers and families.

Oncor CEO Allen Nye said, "For more than 100 years, Oncor has upheld our commitment of serving and supporting Texas communities. And while we know firsthand how resilient these communities are, we also recognize the unparalleled impact of this pandemic and the challenges our communities and nonprofit partners are now facing. We are honored to do our part in helping to meet these needs through the donations announced today."

"Regardless of the challenges we may face, the men and women at Oncor know that we are stronger together," Nye continued. "We want the many communities we serve to know that this commitment of togetherness extends to each of them as we continue to uphold our vital role of powering Texas communities."

For more information on TMCN Event Sponsor Oncor and the company's investment in communities [Click Here](#).

Thank You to Our Partners & Event Sponsors

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 50 communities who make up Texas Midwest Community Network. Please join us in offering our sincere gratitude for the longstanding and continued support of the following partners who have renewed for 2019 and, where possible, please demonstrate this appreciation by utilizing their services:



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

Patron: [Hendrick Health Systems](#), [Jacob & Martin, LLC](#) & [Texas State Technical College](#)

Neighbors: [Atmos Energy](#), [AT&T](#), [Big Country Chevy Dealers](#), [Center for Community Health & Development](#), [Enprotec Hibbs & Todd](#), [Howard College - San Angelo](#) & [Tolar Systems, Inc.](#)

Event Sponsors: [Abilene CVB](#), [Abilene Regional Airport](#), [America's SBDC - Abilene](#), [Angelo State University SBDC](#), [Cisno College](#), [Gayla Fullerton CPA](#), [Oncor](#), & [ResourceCare](#)

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