

The E—Update



**“You can't stop the future
You can't rewind the past
The only way to learn the secret ...is to press play.”
— Jay Asher, *Thirteen Reasons Why***



27th Annual Conference Going Virtual

As our members know, the Texas Midwest Annual Conference is our signature event which offers timely educational sessions, motivational speakers, and peer-to-peer networking. In light of the continued uncertainties associated with the pandemic, the Board of Directors recently voted to move to a hybrid virtual format. While the speakers will present virtually, several member communities will be hosting in-person gatherings to

view the virtual conference or you can view from the comfort of your office. We realize that some of you are eagerly looking forward to seeing your fellow community leaders while others are just not quite ready to step out beyond your local cities - and we understand both.

Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, October 28th** and make plans to join us for the **27th Annual Texas Midwest Conference**. Again, you can view the Conference from the comfort of your office or at a gathering of your peers in one of the following member communities: Brady, Brownwood, Cisco, Snyder or Seymour.

This year's theme is **"Seeing the Small Town Future"** and we are excited to welcome **Deb Brown**, co-founder of [SaveYour.Town](#) and CEO of [Building Possibility](#), as our keynote speaker.

Other noted and confirmed speakers include **Alysia A. Cook**, Principal of [Opportunity Strategies LLC](#) and **Lorie Vincent**, Founder of [Acceleration by Design](#). Be watching for additional information and details on these and other inspiring speakers who will be joining us October 28th - you won't want to miss this year's Conference!



Deb Brown grew up on a farm outside of Geneva, Iowa, population 141. Her first entrepreneurial venture was raising a hog. You'd find her either with her nose in a history book or out exploring abandoned houses and buildings. Funny, things haven't changed much, she's still working on filling empty buildings in small towns.

A wealth of experience includes foreign casualty insurance underwriting, bartending, managing internet stores and luggage stores, selling knives, leading a chamber and working with small towns. Deb has lived in tiny towns, small towns, small cities and a major metro city. Yet, she's come home to a small town and travels to many others to help. She collaborates with Becky McCray at [www.saveyour.town](#) and has her own business Building Possibility.

She has the ability to listen, find the truths in what is working and what isn't, and share your ideas for the future along with other town's examples. Deb is a relentless optimist and knows how to build possibility in your small town. Better yet, she inspires you to take small steps towards a brighter future for your community.

Her programs on small business, what to do with empty buildings, customer service, marketing and economic development have been received by chambers, economic developers, tourism specialists, museum experts, business groups, and small town conferences. Deb has keynoted at Brownfields National Conference, Reviving Rural Downtowns in Adams County, Washington, Rural X Summit in Aberdeen, SD, TEDx Brookings, R2R in Portland, OR, Michigan Rural Economic Development Conference, Roscommon County Michigan, Central Iowa Tourism Annual Meeting, Milbank South Dakota Chamber Annual Dinner and several 140 Character Conferences. Additional presentations include Western Iowa Tourism, Iowa Byways Association, Iowa Museum Association, Southern Illinois Economic Development, and Preserve Iowa Summit. You can find more details at www.buildingpossibility.org.

Good News From the Region

by Comanche Chamber of Commerce

Comanche County Hero Project

The Project launched at the end of July. Six weeks in a row, four essential workers will be gifted a bottle of wine from Brennan Vineyards and a sweet treat from Sister 2 Sister Catering. The essential workers are recognized by their peers for their selflessness and dedication to others and to the community. This project was designed to thank those who continued to work through such uncertain times. Before the pandemic most had a very different version of what "essential" meant. Ideas such as water, food or a roof over our head would have easily come to mind. Today learning to cope with what is becoming the new normal the word takes on a whole new meaning. Now we think about a loved one, someone's sibling, parent or friend. We now no longer think about WHAT is essential but WHO is essential.



Way to go Comanche Chamber of Commerce!

Additional 2019 Leadership TMCN Scholarship Winners Heading to Texas Universities



Our 2nd Place Scholarship Winner was the Team from Baird for their **Long Live the Lake Project**. The project began as a park improvement project but grew into a highly impactful quality of life project for local veterans. Through the team's partnership with Hunters for Heroes, the project encompassed a total renovation of the campgrounds used to support veteran activities. **Aaron Halliburton** has been accepted to and will be attending the University of North Texas in Denton while **Max**

Dayton will be attending Angelo State University in San Angelo.

The 3rd Place Scholarship Winner was the Team from Anson for their **Public Safety - 911 Address Project**. The project began through a desire to assist local first responders, postal service carriers and concerned citizens of Anson. The end result was the enlistment of numerous community volunteers who painted curbs and install mailbox stickers on 206 homes and businesses. **Jillian Thompson** will be joining fellow project participants Megan Stinnett and Peyton Goza at Tarleton State University in Stephenville in the Fall.

We wish all our 2019 Leadership TMCN participants great success in their future endeavors!

AgriLife Extension - The Best Kept Secret

by Lorrie Coop, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Service Family and Community Health Agent in
Knox County



Chances are, you know the Extension Agent in your county, but do you know what all we can really do for you?

We work for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a unique state agency that addresses a diverse range of contemporary and emerging issues that affect local communities through face-to-face programs conducted by county Extension agents, specialists and over 90,000 trained volunteers. Some of those issues include teaching people how to improve agriculture and food production, improve emergency management response in times of disaster, protect the environment, strengthen and build communities, enhance food security, and improve health through diet, exercise, disease prevention and management. We also provide a wide variety of online self-study courses found at <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/>. Additionally, AgriLife Extension offers technical certification and training programs, annually schooling thousands of people who render important community services.

Extension works with a variety of partners — individuals, businesses, private-sector organizations, and other government agencies — to bring educational opportunities to the people of Texas and we always welcome the opportunity to collaborate with new partners to improve the quality of life for Texans across the state. Whether we're leading diabetes education programs, inspecting child safety seats for correct fit, conducting agriculture field days, offering web-based classes for child care providers, developing community leaders or providing technical services such as soil analysis, water testing, pest identification, plant disease diagnosis, and wildlife damage management, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides relevant continuing education that encourages lasting and effective change.

Do you have a question or need to contact an expert? Go local. With a vast network of 250 county Extension offices and some 900 professional educators, the expertise provided by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is available to every resident in every Texas county. For more information, [Click Here](#) to find your nearest county office.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.

Destination Analysts **Latest Travel Industry Update** by DestinationAnalysts.com

Increasing feelings of safety are driving more positivity about tourism—both outbound and within their own communities. And as Americans look out to upcoming holidays, there is a gradually increasing expectation to travel for these occasions.

IMPORTANT: These findings are brought to you from our independent research, which is not sponsored, conducted or influenced by any advertising or marketing agency. Every week since March 15th, Destination Analysts has surveyed 1,200+ American travelers about their thoughts, feelings, perceptions and behaviors surrounding travel in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, and explored a variety of topics. The findings presented below represent data collected August 14th-16th.

Key Findings to Know:

- Pandemic-related health and financial safety concerns have dropped to levels last seen in mid-June. Although there are still notable levels of pessimism, less Americans are feeling the pandemic will worsen in the next month.
- The proportion of American travelers who feels comfortable going out in their own community now exceeds the proportion who do not. And they are getting more comfortable with tourism to their own communities.
- Safety perceptions of travel activities have improved overall, nearing June levels. Thus, the percent of Americans who report being in a “ready to travel” state of mind is now higher than those who report needing more time to feel ready.
- [Those with trip plans for the remainder of the year are commonly prioritizing getting away from crowds and enjoying nature, in addition to spending time with loved ones.](#)
- As Americans look out to upcoming holidays, there is a gradually increasing expectation to travel for these occasions: Labor Day (12.6%), Thanksgiving (15.8%) and Christmas (20.0%).
- Looking even further out over 2021, three-quarters of Americans have at least tentative trip plans right now. Just 25% say they have no plans to travel through 2021.
- About 30% would be up for taking a flight in the next month, although there is somewhat more comfort with direct flights than those that require a connection.
- A majority of American travelers approve of travel restriction policies imposed by state governments on travelers from high outbreak areas.

To stay abreast of the current travel trends, visit [Destination Analysts](#).

The West Central Texas Council of Governments manages and provides support for the Economic Development District (EDD) that serves the 19-county Big Country region.

The EDD supports broad-based economic growth within the West Central Texas Council of Governments region. This program provides data and analysis to local counties, cities, and organizations. Working with analysts the EDD provides a 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that lays out a regional plan with goals and objectives for economic development. The EDD also manages a small business revolving loan fund that new or existing businesses may apply for in order to create or retain jobs. In addition, the EDD provides technical assistance for local governments seeking funding that supports economic and community development. EDD works on various aspects of the grant application process depending on the community's need to include identifying grant opportunities, assisting with grant writing, coordination of site visits, and researching and organizing data to support applications. The EDD has assisted cities and counties with applying for funds through Economic Development Administration (EDA), Texas Department of Agriculture, and United States Department of Agriculture.

Recently, the EDD has been awarded a grant from Economic Development Administration CARES ACT Recovery Assistance Program to provide technical assistance and support for our communities that have been economically distressed by the pandemic. Support for this project will be provided by EDD Regional Coordinators, Brittany Genoway and Jason Kelton. Both Brittany and Jason are knowledgeable in the field of economic development and will be the points of contact for those needing assistance.

The Coordinators will be conducting assessments to determine the extent of economic injury as a result of the coronavirus on the region. To begin the assessments the coordinators have contacted county officials and leaders to gain insight into what is the current state of each community. Once the assessments are complete the coordinators will work with county and city officials to identify funding sources that will support and respond to their need. For more information, please contact our office at 325.672.0495 or via email to Brittany Genoway – bgenoway@westcentraltexas.org or Jason Kelton – jkelton@westcentraltexas.org.



Water and Waste Disposal Program Direct Loans & Grants

The USDA Rural Development in Texas administers the Water and Waste Disposal Programs Direct Loans and Grants and applications are currently being accepted.

This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

This program assists qualified applicants who are not otherwise able to obtain commercial credit on reasonable terms. Eligible applicants include:

- Most state and local governmental entities
- Private nonprofits
- Federally-recognized tribes

Areas that may be served include:

- Rural areas and towns with populations of 10,000 or less -- check eligible addresses
- Tribal lands in rural areas
- Colonias

Funds may be used to finance the acquisition, construction or improvement of:

- Drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and distribution
- Sewer collection, transmission, treatment and disposal
- Solid waste collection, disposal and closure
- Storm water collection, transmission and disposal

In some cases, funding may also be available for related activities such as:

- Legal and engineering fees
- Land acquisition, water and land rights, permits and equipment
- Start-up operations and maintenance
- Interest incurred during construction
- Purchase of facilities to improve service or prevent loss of service
- Other costs determined to be necessary for completion of the project

Julie Crouch-Smith Receives Texas Destination Marketer Certification

by *Stephenville Empire-Tribune*



The Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus along with the City of Stephenville are proud to announce Julie Crouch-Smith, Tourism and Visitors Bureau Manager for the City of Stephenville, has completed all disciplines required to become a Certified Texas Destination Marketer (TDM).

This designation was awarded by the Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau (TACVB) for completing the program of work requiring a minimum of six of the twelve disciplines.

The 12 disciplines include: Texas Heritage/Cultural Tourism, Group Servicing, Administration/Finance, Marketing, Technology, Tourism Sales, Sports Sales, Policy & Advocacy, Facility & Operations, Communications, Visitor Services, and Group Sales. The program demonstrates TACVB's strong commitment to strengthening the knowledge base of employees in convention and visitor bureaus and destination marketing organizations. Upon completion of the program, the professional TDM designation was awarded to Smith.

Smith is a native of Stephenville and graduate of Stephenville High School and Tarleton State University. With over 30 years in public relations, marketing and fund-raising, Smith worked in Austin, Los Angeles, Nashville, Minneapolis, Little Rock and Dallas before returning to Stephenville 10 years ago. Smith led the Cross Timbers Fine Arts Council prior to joining the newly created Stephenville Tourism and Visitors Bureau (STVB) two years ago. The Bureau has helped to facilitate a 7% increase annually in the income each year from Hotel Occupancy Tax prior to COVID-19.



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 Link** on our website at <https://tmcn.org/resources-links/>. 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 at <https://www.facebook.com/TexasMidwest/> and through our internal TMCN ListServ. 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.

Regional Career Changes

Here are a few career changes you may have missed. We extend our best wishes to those accepting new positions:



Brownwood Chamber of Commerce: Kandice Harris, new Communications Manager
City of Eden: Laura Beeson, City Administrator replacing Celina Hemmeter

UPCOMING EVENTS



August 25-26: 53rd Annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference - Virtual, to Register [Click Here](#)

[Click Here](#)

August 25: ARCIT Virtual Speaker Series begins, to Register [Click Here](#)

August 25: Email Marketing Through COVID, Angelo State SBDC, to Register [Click Here](#)

August 31: Small Business Relief Grant Application Deadline, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, to Apply [Click Here](#)

September 1: Texas Department of Agriculture Grant Application Deadline ([Downtown Revitalization/Main Street](#), [FAST Fund](#), and [Planning & Capacity Building Fund](#))

September 2: Recruit & Retain: Recruiting Retail & Restaurants to Your Downtown Webinar, Retail Strategies, to Register [Click Here](#)

September 9: COVID-19 Relief Grant for Craft Disciplined Artists Application Deadline, Craft Emergency Relief Fund, to Apply [Click Here](#) *Additional Music Professional Resources can be found [Here](#).

September 15: Best Management Practices for POTW Compliance: Critical Elements of Successful Wastewater Treatment- Part 2 Webinar, FMI and to Register [Click Here](#)

September 22-23: Rural Health Clinic Conference, Kansas City, FMI and to Register [Click Here](#)

September 30: TMCN Quarterly Membership Meeting: Zoning & Code Enforcement, to Register [Click Here](#)

October 20: Strategies for Small POTWs Handling High Strength Influent, FMI and to Register [Click Here](#)

November 12: Texas Emissions Reduction Plan Grant Deadline, TCEP, FMI [Click Here](#)

* TMCN Events

*** SAVE THE DATE ***

Oct 28: 27th Annual Texas Midwest Conference - Virtual, Watch for the Recent Direct Mail Membership Renewal FMI

Nov 9-13: Future of Rural Texas Symposium, Lubbock, FMI [Click Here](#)

Partner Highlight: Enprotec/Hibbs & Todd

eHT is a civil, environmental and geotechnical engineering firm with offices in Abilene, Lubbock and Granbury in the State of Texas. Established in 1989, their staff consists of engineers, surveyors, geologists, scientists, construction material lab technicians and field operations professionals.



Mission: We are in the business of improving community infrastructure while creating sustainable development and preserving some of our most prized natural resources. In essence, we offer engineering solutions with a view for tomorrow.

Their success is based on enduring partnerships with our clients. eHT takes its client's needs to heart and are an advocate and partner. They go the extra mile to find solutions for clients that solve appropriate short-term and long-term needs.

For more information on TMCN Marketing Partner Enprotec/Hibbs & Todd [Click 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](#)

Patrons: [Hendrick Health System](#), [Jacob Martin](#), [Texas State Technical College](#) & [West Texas Rehabilitation Center](#)

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

3702 Loop 322
Abilene, TX 79602
325-795-8626



Email Us



Texas Midwest Community Network | 3702 Loop 322, Abilene, TX 79602

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