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Communities Working Together to Accomplish What One Community Cannot Do Alone

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## *The* **E—Update**



*Photo by Diann Richardson Bayes*

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**"Winter forms our character and  
brings out our best."**

*-Tom Allen*

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## **A Message from Senator Charles Perry**

*February 20, 2021*

If you or your business were impacted by the winter storm, please click on this link and fill out the [Texas Individual Assistance Reporting Tool \(TIART\)](#). Please forward this information to your friends and family!

The good news is that the White House approved Public Assistance for Emergency Protective Measures in all 254 counties. The bad news is that Individual Assistance was only approved for 77 counties (*now 108 counties as of 2/22/21*). You can click [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov) to see if you already qualify. The state is working to get all 254 counties included for Individual Assistance, but you need to [fill out the TIART survey](#) so we can help show the White House how bad the damage really is to get your county included.

Your County Judge or Emergency Management Coordinator will be doing something similar for the public infrastructure that was damaged during this storm. They are also turning in State of Texas Assistance Requests (STAR) for local needs whether that is bottled water shipments, food distribution, or generators and fuel. Distribution sites run by local jurisdictions are reimbursable under the disaster declaration.

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## **TCEQ Offers Severe Winter Weather Events Resources**

### **Water**

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) would like to provide communities with important information and resources regarding your water to ensure safe drinking water for this past week's severe winter weather storm and its aftermath.

Boil water notices must be issued when distribution pressure drops below 20 pounds per square inch or if disinfection equipment is not functioning properly to maintain the minimum residual (0.2 mg/L free chlorine or 0.5 mg/L chloramines). Should your PWS need to shut down, issue a Boil Water Notice, or issue a Pre-Cautionary Boil Water Notice, please notify the TCEQ regional office that serves your county and by e-mailing documentation to [PWSBWN@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:PWSBWN@tceq.texas.gov). A quick reference guide for issuing a Boil Water Notice is located here: [Boil Water Notice Guide](#).



If you have questions or need immediate assistance, please contact the TCEQ regional office that serves your county. Contact information for TCEQ regional offices can be located [here](#). Please use the TCEQ's emergency hotline, after business hours, at 1-888-777-3186.

Additional assistance is available through the Texas Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (TXWARN). The mission of the TXWARN is to support and promote statewide disaster response and mutual aid assistance for public and private water and wastewater utilities. TXWARN can be contacted at 866-989-9276 or [info@txwarn.org](mailto:info@txwarn.org). For more information, please refer to TCEQ's "Public Drinking Water Systems: Responding to a Disaster" (RG-517b) regulatory guidance located [here](#).

For assistance with compliance sampling or well disinfection, please contact the Drinking Water Quality Team at [pdws@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:pdws@tceq.texas.gov). Additional information and resources related to this weather event are available on the TCEQ's [Severe Cold Weather Event Response](#) webpage.

### **Wastewater**

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is also requesting that wastewater system operators complete the [Wastewater System Outages](#) form if you are experiencing system failures or outages.

The TCEQ is committed to assisting you in your response to the disaster. If you need technical assistance with treatment or repair, please contact a member of the Plan Review Team or Response and Capacity Development Team at [PTRS@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:PTRS@tceq.texas.gov).

### **Rural Ombudsman**

Note that the TCEQ has a Rural Ombudsman, Jason Robinson, who is available to answer any questions. You can reach Jason at [Jason.Robinson@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:Jason.Robinson@tceq.texas.gov) or 512-239-6710.

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## **Texas Midwest Community Network Seeks New Executive Director**

The Board of Directors for the Texas Midwest Community Network seeks a new Executive Director to lead our one-of-a-kind, regional organization.



The Applicant should:

- Be an energetic, self-starter
- Be familiar with and understand the issues and challenges rural communities face
- Be willing to live inside of the TMCN region
- Have reliable transportation and be willing to travel within the TMCN Region as well as some occasional travel outside the region

The Base Compensation is \$45,000 plus Travel Package or more depending upon experience. For more information about the Texas Midwest Community Network, go to [www.tmcn.org](http://www.tmcn.org)

Applications will be accepted through March 15th. Applicants must submit a Cover Letter, Resume and Consent Form by mail to:

Texas Midwest Community Network  
c/o Erin Corbell, President  
P.O. Box 351  
Brady, TX 76825

Or by email to: [ecorbell@bradytx.us](mailto:ecorbell@bradytx.us)

Additional questions can be made to Erin Corbell at 325-597-2152 Ext 212 (Office) or 325-792-8890 (Cell/Text)

## Message from Executive Director Kathy Keane

After much prayer and thoughtful contemplation, I have submitted my letter of resignation after almost seven years in my current position and five additional years as a Board Member and Board President. In May of last year, my husband was diagnosed with leukemia and underwent a stem cell transplant in September at M.D. Anderson in Houston. Since our return home at Christmas, our focus is on his continued recovery and with that, we are now looking forward to spending precious time with our family and traveling the backroads of the Texas Midwest region and our State.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as this organization's Executive Director and a true joy working with each of the community leaders represented in our Network. I am incredibly proud of the work we've done and the achievements we've accomplished together. Without question, TMCN's greatest asset is our collective strength, determination, and passion we hold for small town life and is the reason TMCN continues to bring value to our region and the State as a whole. My heart has been forever changed by the people I've met and the places I've visited throughout the Texas Midwest.

## A Message from Board President - Erin Corbell, Deputy City Manager, Brady

Kathy has been an invaluable asset to the entire TMCN region, and while we are sad to see her leave the organization, we're excited that she is embracing this time to fulfill aspirations with her family. Her undeniable passion for rural Texas will be sorely missed and difficult to replace. On behalf of the TMCN Board of Directors and the entire TMCN region, I want to thank Kathy for her tireless dedication to our organization and wish her the best on her future adventures.

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## Class of 2021 Leadership TMCN Accepting Applications



The research is clear. Engaged, committed individuals are more productive, more efficient and deliver high-level service. They move their organizations and communities forward!

This is exactly what the Leadership TMCN Program has done in our region. We are excited to launch our 8th year of our program in which students and mentors alike discover the tools that move their communities from the stall, known as complacency,

towards a world-class experience. By examining their current community commitment they learn the importance of creating value with others and that there is a difference between just being present and being passionate about what you do.

Session I will be held **April 14th** with Session II on **July 21st** and project judging in **September 15th**. The program culminates with showcase and scholarship announcements at the Texas Midwest Annual Conference in October. The cost is \$150 per student/mentor and can be paid through by the community's chamber, EDC, civic organization or local business.

Over the last seven years, 102 junior classification high school students from the communities of Anson, Baird, Ballinger, Breckenridge, Cisco, Clyde, Coleman, Cross Plains, Dublin, Gorman, Haskell, Munday, Snyder, Stamford, Strawn and Throckmorton have participated. The impact they've made on their communities through their community projects and lessons learned in the process have been immeasurable. If you've not taken the opportunity to give your students this incredible experience, let 2021 be the year!

For more information, take a look at our program [brochure](#) and community [project history](#) since inception. To be a part of this inspiring program, complete the [application](#) and make plans to join us for the April Session. We look forward to seeing you and your students!

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, YOU are a leader." - John Quincy Adams*

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## Legislative Update - Committee Assignments. Special Committee Meetings & Special Election

### Texas State Senate Committee Assignments

**Senator Charles Perry:** Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs (Chair); Health & Human Services (Vice Chair); Education; Finance; Transportation; and Redistricting (Special)

**Senator Dawn Buckingham:** Nominations (Chair); Administration; Finance; Health & Human Services; and Redistricting (Special)

**Senator Drew Springer:** Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs (Vice Chair); Higher Education; Administration; Local Government; and Nominations



### Texas House of Representatives Committee Assignments

**Representative Andrew Murr:** Corrections (Chair); Criminal Jurisprudence; and Redistricting

**Representative Shelby Slawson:** Calendars; Pensions, Investments & Financial Services; and State Affairs

**Representative Glenn Rogers:** Pensions; Investments & Financial Services; and Transportation

**Representative James Frank:** Human Services (Chair) and Juvenile Justice & Family Issues

**Representative Stan Lambert:** Business & Industry and Defense & Veterans' Affairs

**Representative Drew Darby:** Licensing & Administrative Procedures and Energy Resources

**Representative Dustin Burrows:** Calendars (Chair); Corrections; and Land & Resource Management

### Upcoming Special Committee Meetings This Week

As a result of Governor Abbott's declaration that extensive review of ERCOT as an emergency item, House Speaker Dade Phelan requested a joint session of the House State Affairs and Energy Resources Committees, and a [public hearing](#) has been set for Thursday, Feb. 25, at 9 a.m. You can access a livestream of the joint session [here](#).

There will also be a public [hearing](#) before the Senate Business & Commerce Committee on Thursday, Feb. 25, at 9 a.m. You can access the live video broadcast of the Senate [here](#).

### Special Election - House District 68

**Tuesday, February 23rd** is the date of the special election runoff to replace former State Representative Drew Springer, who is now in the Texas Senate.

Early voting for the House District 68 runoff will begin on February 16th. The runoff candidates are David Spiller, a Jacksboro attorney and school board trustee; and Craig Carter, a Nocona businessman.

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## Governor Abbott Declares Broadband An Emergency Item



During his State of the State speech on February 1st, Governor Abbott named expanding broadband access as one of his emergency items for the 87th Texas legislative session.

Currently, there are several rural connectivity bills which have been filed:

- Rep. Ken King's [HB 425](#)
- Sen. Charles Perry's [SB 154](#)
- Rep. Trent Ashby's and Sen. Robert Nichols' [HB 1446](#) / [SB 506](#)

These bills seek to establish the Broadband Development Office within the Comptroller's Department, appoints a nonvoting representative from the Broadband Development Office to the Governor's Broadband Development Council, creates a detailed Broadband Development Map, and creates a grant program to fund connectivity projects across the state.

### Digital Texas - A Coalition of Coalitions

The [Digital Texas](#) Coalition seeks to ensure all Texans have equitable access to reliable and affordable digital connectivity that empowers them to meaningfully engage in their education, employment, healthcare, and the economy, including in rural Texas where long-neglected infrastructure needs must be addressed.

As a rural practitioner voice for our region of Texas and a supporter of rural broadband connectivity, Texas Midwest has a seat at the statewide table and serves on the Digital Texas Steering Committee. One of the most important tasks of the Coalition was to establish [Principals and Priorities](#) to be used as a platform for addressing rural broadband in this legislative session. Community leaders/organizations are encouraged to review the focus of this Coalition including the recently released [Broadband Stories from Rural Texas](#) produced by the Texas Rural Funders. For more information or to join this important initiative, please contact our office or Luis Acuna at [luis.acuna@texas2036.org](mailto:luis.acuna@texas2036.org).

### Texas Rural Funders Offers Advocacy Training

The 87th Texas Legislature is in session and as we can see broadband is one of this year's most important issues. [Texas Rural Funders](#) invites rural community leaders to join them in learning from advocacy experts about the following useful topics:

- Advocacy and Lobbying 101 – What's the Difference and What Rules Apply to Non-profits?
- Rural Broadband Bills and How to Engage with Legislators
- How to "Speak Broadband"
- A Teacher's Advocacy Experience - it's Not as Daunting as it Seems
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This training will provide the information and tools needed to engage with legislators about our rural broadband needs. FMI and to register [click here](#).

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## Healthcare Initiatives Offered by West Texas AHEC



### AHEC Scholars Program

Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Scholars is a program for health professions students interested in supplementing their education by gaining additional knowledge and experience in rural and/or underserved urban settings. This is a

longitudinal program with interdisciplinary curricula to implement a defined set of clinical, didactic, and community-based activities. All experiential or clinical training will be conducted in rural and/or underserved urban settings. Program duration is two years and each year includes the following for a total of 160 hours:

- 40 hours community-based, experiential, or clinical training in rural and/or underserved area
- 40 hours didactic education (focused on six Core Topic Areas)
- Core Topic Areas
  - Interprofessional Education
  - Behavioral Health Integration
  - Social Determinants of Health
  - Cultural Competency
  - Practice Transformation
  - Current and Emerging Health Issues

Students should have a current interest in rural or underserved healthcare and be currently enrolled in a health professions degree or certificate program and be two years from program or degree completion. This includes but is not limited to students in medical, dental, pharmacy, nurse practitioner, nursing, physician assistant, social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and public/population health programs. Students that successfully complete the 40 hours of clinical work and 40 hours of didactic work will be awarded an \$800 stipend payment! That's \$1,600 in 2 years! AHEC is currently enrolling students! If you are interested, please call 325-672-0495 or email [ealexander@westcentraltexas.org](mailto:ealexander@westcentraltexas.org) for more information!

### **Community Health Worker Certification**

The West Texas Area Health Education Center, a certified community health worker (CHW) training institution by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), has recently evolved into The CHW Workforce Development Center. Originally under the auspices of West Texas AHEC and Transforming Communities through Outreach, Recruitment and Education (T-CORE), the new center will offer continuing education units (CEUs) for certified CHWs and intermediate level CHW training such as motivational interviewing, patient navigation, chronic disease management and quality improvement. Additionally, the center will offer training for providers and facilities who seek to employ CHWs and need hiring guides, guides to supervising CHWs, and scope of practice information.

### Certification Course

Students must complete a 160-hour competency-based training program as part of the application for certification. Each course covers eight competencies: Communication, Teaching, Interpersonal Skills, Service Coordination, Capacity Building, Advocacy, Organization, and Knowledge Base. Online Course enrollment is open now through May 2021. Please call 325-672-0495 or email [ealexander@westcentraltexas.org](mailto:ealexander@westcentraltexas.org) for more information!

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## **Texas CDBG Program Now Accepting Applications**



- **Community Development Fund (CD)**: The Community Development Fund is the largest fund category in the TxCDBG Program. Although most funds are used for public facilities (water/wastewater infrastructure, street, and drainage improvements, and housing activities), there are numerous other activities for which these funds may be used. The maximum award amount is \$350,000.
- **Downtown Revitalization/Main Street Programs (DRP/MS)**: The DRP/MS program objective is to provide infrastructure

improvements to address the conditions that contribute to the deterioration in an area designated as slum or blighted in the applicant community's downtown or main street area. Awards range from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$350,000.

- **[Colonia Fund - Construction \(CFC\)](#)**: CFC provides eligible applicants with grants to fund water and wastewater improvements, housing rehabilitation for low- to moderate-income households, the payment of assessments levied against properties owned and occupied by persons of low - and moderate-income to recover the capital cost for a public improvement and other improvements including street paving and drainage. Awards range from a minimum of \$150,000 to a maximum of \$1,000,000.

The online application for these three opportunities can now be found on **[TDA GO!](#)**. Applications are due **May 3, 2021**. Questions related to CDBG programs? Reach out to the **[Economic Development Team](#)**.

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## USDA Now Accepting Grant Applications

USDA is accepting grant applications for projects to improve housing, community facilities, and community and economic development in rural areas. Subject to the availability of funds, grants will be established through **[USDA's Rural Community Development Initiative \(RCDI\) Program](#)**.

Eligible recipients include public bodies, nonprofit organizations, and qualified private (for-profit) organizations. Applicants must provide matching funds in an amount at least equal to the federal grant. The application deadline is March 22, 2021. For more information on the program and the application process, please visit the **[USDA website](#)** or reach out to the **[USDA Texas State Office](#)**.



Committed to the future of rural communities.

USDA is also accepting applications for projects that support Strategic Regional Economic and Community Development Planning (SECD). For Fiscal Year 2021, SECD is accepting applications for the:

- **[Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program](#)**;
- **[Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program](#)**;
- **[Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program](#)**;
- **[Water and Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees](#)**;
- **[Business & Industry Loan Guarantees](#)**;
- **[Rural Business Development Grants](#)**; and
- **[Community Connect Grants](#)**

The application for the Rural Business Development Grant is July 31, 2021. For all other programs, the deadline is June 30, 2021. For more information on the program and the application process, please visit the **[USDA website](#)** or reach out to the **[USDA Texas State Office](#)**.

### Other Funding Opportunity Announcements

- **[Value-Added Producer Grant \(VAPG\) Program](#)**, USDA, Due March 22, 2021
- **[Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant](#)**, USDA, Due March 22, 2021
- **[Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program \(RMAP\)](#)**, USDA, Due March 31, 2021
- **[Rural Health Care Telecommunications Program](#)**, Universal Service Administrative Company, Due April 1, 2021

- [Rural Healthcare Connect Fund](#), FCC, Due April 1, 2021
- [Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program](#), USDA, Due May 4, 2021

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## Texas Lakes Trail Offers Exhibit That Tell the Stories of Texas



Are you looking for exhibits to showcase at your local museum or visitor site? The Texas Lakes Trail Region has provided quality exhibits for over 10 years and are happy to announce additions to their collection. Their goal is to provide exhibits for communities that can fit into the smallest of budgets and to increase visitation to the places that are hosts.

Available exhibits are:

[Women, Aviation, and WWII](#)

[Texas Crochet Heritage](#)

[Cynthia Ann & Quanah Parker](#)

[The Vaquero: The First American Cowboy](#)

[The Chisholm Trail](#)

There are dates open starting now through 2022. For more information contact Jill at 817-559-2288 or [jill@texaslakestrail.net](mailto:jill@texaslakestrail.net).

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## Job Openings

Looking for a career change? Here are a few opening across the Texas Midwest region.



[Executive Director, Breckenridge Economic Development Corporation](#)

[Executive Director, Menard Chamber of Commerce & Industrial Development Corporation](#)

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## Regional Career Changes

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



**Breckenridge Economic Development Corporation**: Virgil Moore, Executive Director will be retiring (see job posting above)

**City of Clyde**: Mike Murray, City Manager, accepts a new position in Westworth Village

**Menard Chamber of Commerce**: Cherry Swindall, Executive Director, will be leaving for new adventures (see job posting above)

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## 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.

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**February 24:** Microsoft 365 Productivity & Planning, TMCN Marketing Partner Tolar Systems, FMI [Click Here](#)

**February 24:** NFIB, Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC): Step by Step instructions with a CPA Webinar, FMI [Click Here](#)

**March 5:** Deadline for Take Care of Texas Kids Art Contest submissions, FMI [Click Here](#)

**March 24:** Security Awareness Webinar, TMCN Marketing Partner Tolar Systems, FMI [Click Here](#)

**March 29-April 1:** Texas Police Association Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, FMI [Click Here](#)

**April 29:** TMCN Quarterly Membership Meeting, Abilene, FMI [Click Here](#)

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

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

\* **TMCN Event**

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## Partner Highlight: Enprotec/Hibbs & Todd

**Enprotec/Hibbs & Todd** is a civil, environmental and geotechnical engineering firm with offices in Abilene, Lubbock and Granbury. Established in 1989, their staff consists of engineers, surveyors, geologists, scientists, construction material lab technicians and field operations professionals.



Their success is based on enduring partnerships with their clients, many of whom are in the Texas Midwest region. eHT takes their client's needs to heart and is an advocate and partner. Their promise is to 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

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