

Government Foundation Meeting

April 7, 2009

Trent Ashby called the meeting at the Angelina County Chamber of Commerce to order at 7:30 AM at the Lufkin/Angelina Chamber of Commerce.

Attendees were Jane Ainsworth, Jody Anderson, Mark Dunn, Trey Henderson, Jerry Huffman, Kevin Langston, Bruce Milstead, Paul Parker, Joe Rich, Jim Wehmeier, Judge Paul White, Susie Cardwell, and Trent Ashby. Kyle Mence of the Census Bureau was a guest today.

Appointment to State Boards:

Trent Ashby reported that within the past two months, four special appointments from Angelina County have been made to State Boards. They include the following:

Tom Gann - Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Jody Anderson – Angelina Neches River Authority
Rodney Moore – Texas Public Financing Authority
Barbara Mathis – One Call Board

There is still a need for representation from East Texas and Trent requested that names of any potential board members be forwarded to him as soon as possible. Trent will send out again the list of potential board members that was put together earlier. There will be more vacancies coming up at the end of 2009 and this will be an on-going effort to fill some of these with East Texans.

Census:

Kyle Mence, Partnership Specialist, Dallas Regional Census Center of the U.S. Census, gave an update on the upcoming Census. Kyle, born and raised in Lufkin and currently living in Livingston, is very familiar with East Texas and their historically low mail-in response. He is holding a training session on April 9th from 10:00 a.m. until noon in the Chamber Board Room for the committee that has been put together to oversee the Census efforts in our area. The training will be how to educate and get the word out that the Census is safe with focus on reaching the minorities and economically disadvantaged. Angelina County has done so much preparation for this upcoming Census that Houston is looking at Angelina County as a model to follow.

The local Census team consists of committee and subcommittees of the following people:

County Chair – Judge Wes Suiter
Co-Chairs – Dorothy Wilson and Trent Ashby

Co-chairs for Government – Judge Wes Suiter and Mayor Gorden
Co-chairs for Education – Dr. Larry Phillips and Roy Knight

Co-chairs for Faith – Tony Holder, Reverend Betty Kennedy, Kindred Morris
Co-chairs for Media – Tim Hobbs and Roy Reyes
Co-chairs for Business and Recruiting – Trey Henderson and Martha Hernandez
Co-chairs for Community – Tara Watson, Jerry Huffman, Ronnie Robinson

The first event on the calendar for the Census team will be Cinco de Mayo. The team will have a manned booth with educational materials. The Census has about \$3 million to award annually for various projects such as highways bridges, hospitals, etc. One of the goals of this group is to receive an appropriate portion of these funds for use in Angelina County.

Economic Development:

Jim Wehmeier gave a legislative update on some of the bills pending that would effect Angelina County. These include the following:

- \$450,000 for water infrastructure to benefit Lufkin on a federal level
- A bill for the state schools regarding the authority to close them is probably dead.
- A bill for purging the State Schools down to 3,000 residents and placing them into community-based homes – still pending
- A bill to create a Rural Development Fund (state funded) – still pending
- A bill to allow Nacogdoches/Angelina County to have a county hotel/motel tax – still pending
- A bill to establish a regional emergency response management depot here in Lufkin to warehouse emergency supplies – still pending

Mark Dunn requested a list of projects that would help the City and/or County from Paul Parker and Jim Wehmeier. These will be proposed by the Rotary Club for possible funding.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Vision 2020 Government committee will be on **June 9th at 7:30 a.m.** at the Lufkin/Angelina Chamber of Commerce Board Room.