

CAPCOG CONNECTIONS

A Publication of the Capital Area Council Of Governments



Wildflower Center Symposium Features Conservation Subdivisions

Travis County's proposed conservation development ordinance was recently highlighted at the fifth annual Conservation Development Symposium hosted by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

The symposium, conducted to provide building professionals and community leaders with an improved understanding of profitable and ecologically sound approaches to residential development, focused on conservation subdivisions that cluster homes and infrastructure to conserve a significant portion of land and balance residential development with agricultural needs and natural resources.



The Travis County ordinance, being considered for adoption, is being promoted as an optional alternative to the County's existing development pro-

cess. It would regulate the design, processing and approval of a conservation development within the unincorporated and non-ETJ portion of Travis County. The primary goals of this ordinance are to protect rural or natural assets, reduce density and promote clustering, promote resource sustainability and conservation, promote commercial nodes, maximize development certainty, and provide incentives for landowners and developers.

(see *Symposium* page 4)

CAPCOG Region Awarded \$1,560,032 In Criminal Justice Grants

The Governor's Office, Criminal Justice Division (CJD), announced the FY2007 grant awards for Region 12 in mid-October. The awards came from four funding sources, with a total amount of \$1,560,032 representing an increase of \$200,461 in the FY2006 total award amount.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides funds to projects with the primary mission of reducing and preventing violence against women. According to federal rule, CJD distributes at least 25% of grant funds for law enforcement activities, 25% for prosecution programs, 30% for victim services programs, and 5% for court programs. Recipients were Bastrop County Women's Shelter, City of Austin (APD), Hays County, Williamson County Crisis Center, Political Asylum Project of Austin, and Travis County.

The State Fund 421 supports local

projects that target crimes committed by adults or juveniles such as prosecution, information sharing, victim services, court, statewide and regional training, and other projects. Recipients were CAPCOG, City of Austin (APD), Travis County, Bastrop County Women's Shelter, Any Baby Can of Austin, Inc., Caldwell County Juvenile Board, Travis County Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Survival Center, and Southwest Key Program, Inc. Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) funds are federal pass-through funds that support prevention, diversion, intervention, and training projects related to juvenile justice or prevention (See *Grants* page 4)



Inside This Issue

Economic Development	2
RTA's 100% Pass Rate	3
Planner Accepts New Position	3
AAA Success Story	3

Rethinking Regional Economic Development: Why Closing Urban-Rural Gaps is Critical for Central Texas

By Sean Moran

“That might be fine for Austin, but we are a small town...”

Chances are you have heard that sentiment expressed by elected officials, residents, or even local businesses if you do economic development work in rural areas. But is it true? Do different rules apply for economic development in urban and rural communities?

Clearly, each community brings unique assets to the table when it comes to competing for business, investment, and talented people. Companies rarely have identical needs, and even the most rural economies have competitive advantages. Communities also face different sets of challenges and opportunities related to economic development. Critical infrastructure needs can range from high-speed highways to high-speed Internet access, even within a single region like the five-county Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area.

However, despite the myriad factors affecting individual urban or rural areas, every community is now facing exactly the same question: How can we successfully compete in the modern global economy? And the answer,

whether you’re located in Central Texas or Central Alaska, will eventually come down to the same three factors: information, collaboration, and innovation.

Information is the critical starting point for launching an effective economic development strategy. Unfortunately, it is also usually the largest obstacle in small towns

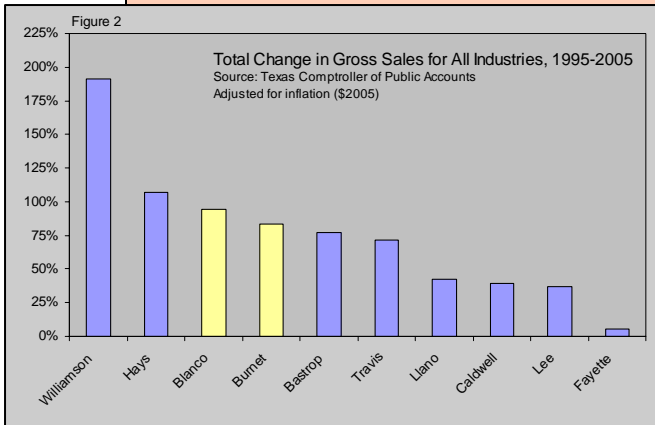
and rural communities. Economic developers working outside of urban areas face the Herculean task of meeting community expectations for private investment and high-wage jobs with only minimal resources available to them for consulting services, technical support, and market studies. Overcoming misconceptions about business viability in rural areas is difficult enough, and the lack of attention paid to rural economic issues only compounds the problem.

So what do we know about rural economies in Central Texas? Recent trends suggest that many rural businesses here are thriving. For example, gross sales per outlet in Blanco County were second only to Travis County in 2006Q1 (Figure 1). And Blanco and Burnet counties placed third and fourth, respectively, in sales growth during 1995-2005 among the ten counties in CAPCOG’s service area (Figure 2). We also know that creating an environment that nurtures entrepreneurship is vital for any local economy to compete effectively, urban or rural. In the Capital Area, the number of self-employed residents in the five rural counties—Blanco, Burnet, Fayette, Lee, and Llano—grew at almost exactly the same pace as the number of self-employed residents in the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area during 1994-2004. Given the resource gaps and other challenges facing rural entrepreneurs, that is an impressive statistic. But we will need to know

much more about rural economies if we are going to achieve meaningful and lasting economic development for the entire ten-county region.

To help address that need, CAPCOG has recently launched the Center for Regional Development (CRD), which will be a clearinghouse for disseminating data and best practices to local economic developers and other planners in Central Texas. The CRD website will offer timely data, useful analysis, information on grant opportunities, and access to various GIS and mapping tools—all in a single, conveniently accessible place and at no charge. CRD staff will also be available to assist you with various consulting services, market studies, or other technical needs. Our goal is to provide stakeholders with the best information possible to make strategic decisions that benefit local communities as well as the region as a whole.

In addition to providing information, CRD staff over the next year will be working with the Capital Area Economic Development District (CAEDD) and other regional groups to address the other two critical factors for competing in the 21st century economy: collaboration and innovation. We believe that all communities—urban and rural—can compete effectively with access to the right tools and strong commitments to regional partnerships. We look forward to working with you to make that a reality. For more information on the CRD, please visit www.capcog.org/crd.



Figure

Travis
Blanco
Williamson
Lee
Hays
Bastrop
Fayette
Burnet
Llano
Caldwell

Source: Texas Co
* Includes only ho

The Regional Training Academy has Another 100% Pass Rate At The State Licensing Examination

All 22 students in CAPCOG's Class 42 Basic Peace Officer Course passed the State Licensing Examination on their first attempt. The class, which completed the 772-hour course started in May, graduated in September at the State Capitol's Senate Chambers with Cedar Park Police Department Chief Henry Fluck as their guest speaker.

Class 43 of the CAPCOG Basic Peace Officers Course, which began in June, 2006, will graduate Feb. 23, 2007. This 33-week night class meets at the Regional Training Academy's campus from 6-10 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and numerous Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



CAPCOG PLANNER ACCEPTS NEW POSITION

Eric Dusza, our Community Planner, has accepted a position with the City of Austin Bicycle and Pedestrian Division. Over the past two years, Eric has been instrumental in supporting our most significant planning initiatives, including the CARTPO Call for Project, the Regional Review Committee, and the Regional



Transit Coordination Committee.

We'll miss Eric's dedicated and friendly professionalism and wish him the best of luck. Look for the job vacancy notice for Eric's replacement in January on the CAPCOG website at [http://www.capcog.org/](http://www.capcog.org/Jobs/)

Mar. 9, 2006.

The Regional Training Academy kicked off its new 120-hour Peace Officer Supplemental Course in October, 2006, which is required for all out-of-state peace officers and federal law enforcement officers. It must be completed in order to become a certified peace officer in Texas. This course is being held at the Pflugerville Police Department from 6-10 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each Saturday.

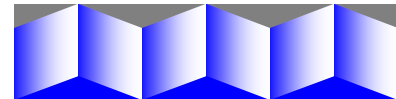


Table 1 Total Industry Sales in 2006Q1

Gross Sales*	Outlets	Sales per Outlet
10,699,702,236	24,251	\$441,207
129,242,171	324	\$398,896
2,686,145,025	6,769	\$396,830
132,409,740	442	\$299,570
826,943,074	3,120	\$265,046
263,784,774	1,312	\$201,055
169,481,561	844	\$200,808
215,045,955	1,154	\$186,348
76,430,798	547	\$139,727
92,842,682	665	\$139,613

Comptroller of Public Accounts
Holders of sales tax permits

Public/Private Approach Is Success Story

The Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area (AAACAP) staff must use innovation and collaboration in order to meet the needs of older adults in the ten-county CAPCOG region.

When an elderly gentleman in Bastrop County who suffers from the ravages of polio was in desperate need of an affordable place to live, a group of Christian men, led by a 92-year-old activist, came together and obtained a small travel trailer for him which was parked at a local mobile home park. These men became advocates for the gentleman and soon sought services to meet his

other needs. They eventually requested assistance from the Area Agency on Aging to arrange for home-delivered meals.

Minerva Croston, Care Coordinator for the AAACAP, visited the gentleman to assess his eligibility for the rural frozen meal program, Country Meals, which is operated by Meals on Wheels and More, Inc. During the assessment, Ms. Croston determined that due to his physical limitations, financial constraints, and lack of transportation he had no way to wash his clothes. (See **Success**, page 4)

Symposium (cont'd from page 1)

In addition to these benefits, Travis County's conservation development ordinance would aid in the reduced consumption of energy, water, and materials.

For more information on Travis County's proposed conservation development ordinance, please visit their website at www.co.travis.tx.us or contact Sean Moran at smoran@capcog.org or (512) 916-6030.

Grants (cont'd from page 1)

activities. Recipients were Hays County, The Arc of the Capital Area, Luling ISD, Travis and Williamson Counties, The Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes, and the Girls Empowerment Network of Austin for youths.

Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Fund (SDFSC), another federal pass-through fund, focuses on promoting safe and drug-free neighborhoods, fostering individual responsibility, promoting respect for others, and improving school attendance. Recipients were City of Austin (APD), Travis County Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Survival Center, SafePlace, River City-Youth Foundation, Bastrop County Women's Shelter, Hays County, Southwest Key Program, and the City of Pflugerville.

Success (cont'd from page 3)

The AAACAP, through funding from the Older Americans Act, was able to purchase a compact washer/dryer for him. Unfortunately, there was not enough room in the travel trailer in which to fit the unit, so, once again, the group of men stepped up. They got approval from the mobile home park owners to build a shed next to the travel trailer to securely house the washer/dryer.

This private/public collaboration resulted in a success story for the older adult, the community, and the AAACAP.

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