

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

Jr

June 24, 2013

The Honorable Ramon Garcia
Hidalgo County Judge
100 E Cano, 2nd Floor
Edinburg, TX 78540

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COUNTY JUDGE

Dear Judge Garcia,

We are pleased to inform you that the Hidalgo County Historical Commission (CHC) is a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award for outstanding preservation work accomplished in the 2012 year of service. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) gives this award to CHCs who successfully manage preservation programs that educate citizens and generate interest in the history and character of Texas.

To acknowledge this achievement, we ask that you **present the enclosed Distinguished Service Award (DSA) certificate to CHC appointees during a formal meeting of the commissioners court.** This is the most effective way to show gratitude for CHC efforts and to publicly acknowledge their service, which is often overlooked and undervalued. Public recognition of CHC service will encourage appointees to continue efforts to preserve your county's heritage. Your support and influence are vital to the livelihood of your CHC.

Enclosed is a press release announcing your CHC's achievement so that you can **promote this important accomplishment.** In these challenging times, this DSA award helps to illustrate the positive aspects of county government. Investing in your CHC can lead to a substantial amount of monetary and in-kind donations to your county, along with increased economic development that often accompanies efforts such as heritage tourism events, community gatherings, historic designations, and historic rehabilitations.

Thank you for your continued support of history and preservation and for appointing such committed individuals to your CHC. Congratulations to you and your CHC appointees on a job well done.

Sincerely,



Bratten Thomason
History Programs Division Director
Texas Historical Commission

Enclosed: DSA Award, Press Release, Promotional Suggestions
cc: Hidalgo County Historical Commission Chair



PRESS! RELEASE

CONTACTS: (COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION CHAIR NAME, PHONE, EMAIL)
Amy Hammons, 512.475.2692, amy.hammons@thc.state.tx.us

DATE: June 24, 2013

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION HONORS (COUNTY NAME) COUNTY WITH THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas Historical Commission (THC) recently recognized (COUNTY NAME) County with a Distinguished Service Award for the 2012 year of service. This award was presented during a meeting of the Commissioner’s Court on (DAY, MONTH #) and recognized their County Historical Commission (CHC) for managing preservation programs that educate citizens and generate interest in the history and character of Texas. This award also acknowledges the CHC’s efforts to preserve Texas’ unique heritage by promoting stewardship of, and tourism to, our state’s unique cultural and historic sites.

“The Distinguished Service Award is our agency’s way of affirming County Historical Commissions that continue to improve and expand their preservation programs,” said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe. “The Texas Historical Commission works with CHCs to save the real places and tell the real stories of Texas. Join us in honoring the (YOUR COUNTY) County Historical Commission for their dedication and hard work.”

Unlike most states, Texas counties have the legislative authority to establish CHCs to initiate and conduct programs that preserve historic and cultural resources. Texas CHCs are made up of unpaid county appointees who reported volunteer hours for the 2012 year of service that had a monetary value of more than \$8.8 million. The THC provides services to CHCs, as well as citizens across the state, to preserve Texas’ heritage for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations. CHC contributions include the preservation of countless historic buildings, artifacts, documents, and other components of Texas’ rich history.

For more information about the Distinguished Service Award, visit www.thc.state.tx.us or contact the History Program’s Division at 512.463.5853.

www.thc.state.tx.us

**PLEASE REVIEW THE FOLLOWING OPPORTUNITIES
to acknowledge and promote positive activity in your county:**

■ **HONORING YOUR CHC FOR ITS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD (DSA)**

Consider including a **formal acknowledgement** of this award during an upcoming meeting of the county commissioners court. Remember that your CHC has put in a great deal of time and energy to secure this award that reflects positively on your county. Any celebration you choose to organize on their behalf is greatly appreciated.

Please make sure CHC appointees are given sufficient notice to attend the meeting/event if a formal acknowledgement is made. If they do not already, ask your CHC to regularly report to commissioners court so that you are aware of their efforts and accomplishments.

■ **PRESS RELEASE**

Enclosed in this mailer is a press release concerning the Distinguished Service Award that may be used for distribution to local media. This is an easy way to spread the news of the positive work accomplished by your CHC, an organization for which you provide oversight. This is a “Swiss cheese” press release that allows you to insert your county name, acknowledgement date, and CHC Chair contact information prior to sharing it with local and regional media outlets. Promoting your CHC’s accomplishments is a great way to promote county government and the services you provide the public.

■ **APPOINTEE CONTINUING EDUCATION**

The Texas Historical Commission, along with several other preservation organizations, provide educational opportunities to train CHCs for the job for which they were appointed. Please consider providing funds that enable your appointees to attend these training sessions; this is an investment in your commission.

We also ask that you encourage your appointees, new and seasoned, to access the CHC Handbook. This document can be downloaded at no cost to your county to be used as a digital reference tool or to be duplicated on a printer or copier. This manual is located on the CHC Publications page of the THC website; locate this page by using the search box on our main page (www.thc.state.tx.us) and entering the key words, “CHC publications.”

■ **CHC APPOINTMENTS**

The Texas Local Government Code asks that counties provide an updated list of CHC appointments in January of odd-numbered years. Several counties have yet to submit a roster for their 2013-14 term of service. We have notified CHC Chairs of their status for appointee submissions; please work with your CHC to fulfill this statutory responsibility.

If you have questions about the CHC appointee process, call Amy Hammons at 512.475-2692. State statutes regarding CHCs, the appointee process, and a document listing suggested CHC appointee criteria is located on the THC website; locate this page by using the search box on our main page (www.thc.state.tx.us) and entering the key phrase, “review and compliance for CHCs.”

■ **DSA PAPERWEIGHT**

Each DSA-winning CHC is given a certificate. If your CHC would like to purchase a DSA aluminum paperweight, please fill out the order form located on the THC website; to find this form, use the search box on our main page (www.thc.state.tx.us) and enter the key phrase, “DSA paperweight.”