



Enhancing the Quality of

Life for

Rural Texans

Would you like to help sponsor a regional conference in your community? You can contact ARCIT Executive Director, Kara Mayer Mayfield at kara@arcit.org for more information. Together we are making a difference for rural and small communities in Texas!

ARCIT Working Together for a Common Goal

Although no single “blueprint” exists for creating success in rural Texas, Texas’ economy is as diverse as its geography and each region has its disadvantages and advantages. This past fall, ARCIT members were asked to provide a list of concerns being faced in their community. In reviewing the responses, the one common goal for all rural and small communities was leveraging all available local and regional resources — financial, structural, professional and personal — with all available funding sources — local, state and federal — to develop a customized, workable plan for that community.

Texas is a leader in economic development; however lack of water, infrastructure, mobility, tax support, and push back by local citizens for change can cause major roadblocks to small communities from expanding economic and community developments. Therefore, communities must work with area residents and business leaders to develop a realistic local and/or regional strategic plan. This is where being a member of ARCIT becomes a value to your area. ARCIT works together with its members and government leaders to help establish common objectives and identify strategic partners in turn enabling communities to locate opportunities and build relationships to help them achieve

Strengths, Threats and Opportunities to Municipalities and EDC’s

One of the agenda items during the ARCIT Annual Conference in November 2015, was a Breakout Session Discussion where attendees collaborated and answered 3 questions pertaining to rural and small municipalities and Economic Development Corporation’s (EDC). Overall, the attendees had the same opinions even though they were from different parts of Texas. Please find Below the three questions asked and the answers received from ARCIT members.

1. *What is the greatest strength of rural and small municipalities / EDC’s?*

- Ability to jump start the economy
- Driving force in the community; work hard to make progress; businesses collecting sales tax are on the EDC team
- Relationship building; connected to local leaders
- Ability to use incentives to recruit businesses
- Job retention and creation; hometown atmosphere
- Ability to work closely together
- Expertise
- More flexibility to attract business & industry

2. *What is the greatest threat to rural and small municipalities / EDC’s?*

- Not cooperating and dropping the ball
- No funding support from the state for job creation; people leave town for work
- Ourselves; struggle to be aggressive and take chances for the sake of the taxpayers
- Special interest groups
- Tight budgets / operational budgets
- State and federal regulations
- Loss of middle class
- Lack of city funds to build infrastructure to recruit new businesses
- Inability to create revenue sources to allow growth and produce services

Strengths, Threats and Opportunities to Municipalities and EDC's (continued...)

3. What is the greatest opportunity to and small municipalities / EDC's?

- Working together on a local level
- Capitalize on opportunities that occur during an economic downturn when businesses are looking for more affordable locations
- Simple life as compared to big cities; ability to be more flexible
- Understanding the roles of each other and working together for a common good
- Ability to partner with larger cities
- Limitless upside for economic growth
- Large parcels of land to recruit larger industries
- Growth
- Attracting small businesses that want to leave congestion found in big cities
- Attracting spin off industries that are not typically recruited by larger cities
- Overgrowth from major metroplexes

Needless to say, the results from the Breakout sessions concluded that ARCIT must continue to focus on government programs and related policies while focusing on maintaining and promoting a competitive environment to reflect the reality that businesses have many options when deciding where to place capital and jobs.

In the News....

- ***Texas Department Of Agriculture Increases More Than 100 Fees*** — More than 100 fees related to agriculture production are going up this year in Texas, Among the fees boosted are certifications, such as those for applying pesticides or organic and seed certifications
- ***More than 50 new laws went into effect Jan. 1 in Texas*** — Although much attention was focused on the new law that lets licensed Texans openly carry their holstered handguns throughout the state, there were dozens of other measures that quietly became into effect including laws on issues ranging from abortions for Texas teens to franchise taxes for businesses. .
- ***Sen. Ellis mum on rumors he will leave the Senate to run for county commissioner.***
- ***Supreme Court poised to implement three judge panel in time for school finance case*** — An opinion on the school finance case is due out this spring, probably after the March primary elections.
- ***Gov. Abbott calls for constitutional convention*** -- He wants nine new amendments to the US Constitution to "put teeth into the 10th Amendment"

Don't forget that as an ARCIT member you have access to a range of programs and services available to your community. Please contact ARCIT at (512) 788-1819 for more details or visit the ARCIT website at www.arcit.org.

Texas Disaster Assistance Update and How to Replace Lost / Damaged Documents

They say if you don't like the weather in Texas, wait five minutes -- it'll change. Disasters such as floods and tornadoes may affect your community at some point. Therefore, ARCIT wanted to provide an update on the current disaster declaration for Texas, as well as a list of contact information on where to go and how to replace any important documents that may be lost or damaged due to a disaster in your area.

At the end of December, Governor Abbott declared a State Of Disaster in Collin, Dallas, Ellis and Rockwall Counties due to recent severe weather and tornado events in and near the Dallas area.

Also, the Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Texas (FEMA-4245-DR-TX) was issued for damages occurring during the Incident Period of Oct. 20-Oct. 31, 2015 and was amended to include Bastrop, Bosque, Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, Hidalgo, Hill, Jasper, Liberty, Navarro, Newton, Travis, Walker, Willacy, and Wilson Counties for Public Assistance; this will aid in infrastructure damages of public supported structures.

Lastly, Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announces disaster relief resources are available through the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to rural communities, farmers and ranchers who have been impacted by recent severe weather. The commissioner has also encouraged Texans to donate to disaster relief efforts through reputable organizations, such as the State of Texas Agriculture Relief (STAR) Fund, which is administered by TDA and helps farmers and ranchers with agricultural disaster relief efforts, including cost share for rebuilding fences and restoring operations. To donate to the STAR Fund to help Texans in need, please visit TexasAgriculture.gov. To apply for assistance through the STAR Fund, please visit <http://texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/DisasterAssistance/STARFund.aspx>.

Additionally, farmers and ranchers who have sustained losses to livestock as a result of severe weather may be eligible for assistance through the USDA Farm Service Agency Disaster Assistance Program. For more information about this program, please visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>.

For more information on Texas recovery, visit the disaster web page at www.fema.gov/disaster/4245, and the Texas Division of Emergency Management website, <https://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem>.

2016 ARCIT Board of Directors

The Honorable Mike Sutherland, Burtleson County

The Honorable Byron Ryder, Leon County

The Honorable Jimmy Sylvia, Chambers County

The Honorable Lee Norman, Garza County

Carolyn Gibson, City Development Corporation of El Campo

Robin Betts, Fire Chief, City of Atlanta

Vicky Rudy, City Manager, Oak Ridge North

Lynda Pack, Jacksboro Eco. Devo. Corp.

Please note ARCIT's new address....

**1122 Colorado St. Ste. 102
Austin, Texas 78703
www.arcit.org**

Helpful Contacts for Replacement of Lost or Damaged Documents

SNAP Card (Food Stamps):

Phone: 800-777-7328

Website: <https://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/providers/LoneStar/EBT/EBThowto.html>**Green Cards:**

Phone: 800-375-5283

Website: <http://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-green-card-granted/replace-green-card>**Birth and death certificates:**

Phone: 888-963-7111

Website: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/reqproc/default.shtm>**Texas Driver License:**

Phone: 512-424-2600

Website: <https://www.txdps.state.tx.us/DriverLicense/replace.htm>**Bank Checks, ATM/Debit Cards, or Safe Deposit Boxes:**

Phone: 877-275-3342

Website: www.fdic.gov**Credit Cards:** Contact the issuing institution:

American Express: 800-992-3404

https://online.americanexpress.com/myca/mobl/us/static.do?page=un_lostorstolenDiscover: 800-347-2683 www.discover.com/credit-cards/help-center/Master Card: 800-622-7747 www.mastercard.com/cgi-bin/emergserv.cgiVisa: 800-847-2911 www.usa.visa.com**Credit Reports:** Equifax, Experian or TransUnion

Phone: 877-322-8228

Website: www.annualcreditreport.com**Social Security Card:**

Phone: 800-772-1213

Website: www.ssa.gov**Fraud alerts or a credit freeze:**

Phone: 877-438-4338

Website: <http://www.texasfightsidtheft.gov/>**Medicare Cards:**

Phone: 800-772-1213

Website: www.socialsecurity.gov/medicarecard/**Passport:**

Phone: 202-955-0430 or 1-877-487-2778

Website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/lost-stolen.html>**U.S. Savings Bonds:**

Phone: 800-722-2678 or 800-553-2663

Website: <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/>**Tax Returns:**

Phone: 800-829-1040

Website: <http://www.irs.gov>

Helpful Contacts for Replacement of Lost of Damaged Documents: (continued...)

Military Records:

Phone: 866-272-6272

Website: www.archives.gov/contact/

Vehicle Titles:

Phone: 888-368-4689

Website: <http://txdmv.gov/motorists/buying-or-selling-a-vehicle/get-a-copy-of-your-title>

Insurance Documents:

Phone: Check with your own insurance agent

Website: <http://insurance.lawyers.com/natural-disasters/replacing-personal-documents-lost-in-a-disaster.html>

Real Estate and Property Records (Mortgage Documents, Deeds, etc.):

Phone: Contact your own agent

Website: <http://propertydeeds.org/lost-property-deed-replacement-procedure/>

Medical and Prescription Records:

Call your own doctor; medical and prescription records are tracked electronically.

Replace a Texas Marriage Record or Certificate:

Website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/localremotedistrict.shtm>

Proof of Address/Residency:

Website: <http://dps.texas.gov/Internetforms/FormDetail.aspx?Id=295&FormNumber=DL-5.pdf>

Spanish Website: <http://dps.texas.gov/Internetforms/FormDetail.aspx?Id=2701&FormNumber=DL-5s.pdf>

National Archives Records:

General: <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/records-emergency/public.html>

Saving family records <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/disaster-response/guidelines.html>



Be on the lookout for your 2016 membership renewal notice!

First Quarter renewals were mailed out January 6th!!