

## Leadership Advisory Board

### Travis County

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Lydia Steinman  
Lupe Velasquez

For more information about these and other events, please call 512-854-9600 or visit our website: <http://travis-tx.tamu.edu/>

## Calendar of Events

### October 2014

2 Backyard Basics: Integrated Pest Management  
5-11 National 4-H Week  
8 4-H National Youth Science Day-Rockets to the Rescue  
11 One Day 4-H  
13 4-H Spirit Night @ Good Luck Grill  
16 Food Safety for the Small Acreage Producer  
21 Extension Centennial Resolution  
22 Central Texas Irrigation/Turf Maintenance Workshop  
24 History Day: Extension Centennial Celebration

### November 2014

6 Backyard Basics: Backyard Chickens  
6 County 4-H Food Show  
11 Veteran's Day Observed - OFFICE CLOSED  
18 County 4-H Food Challenge Contest  
20 Leadership Advisory Board meeting  
27-28 Thanksgiving Observed - OFFICE CLOSED

### December 2014

4 4-H Scholarship Workshop  
11 Business Planning for the Small Acreage Producer  
13 District 4-H Food Show & Food Challenge Contests  
25-26 Christmas Observed - OFFICE CLOSED

TEXAS A&M  
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Cooperative Extension Program

## In Cooperation With... TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Samuel T. Biscoe  
County Judge

Ron Davis Commissioner, Precinct 1  
Bruce Todd Commissioner, Precinct 2  
Gerald Daugherty Commissioner, Precinct 3  
Margaret Gomez Commissioner, Precinct 4

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### EDITORIAL TEAM

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County Extension Director  
Irma Marquez  
Office Supervisor  
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Administrative Assistant

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

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# Making a Difference

FALL 2014

in Travis County



Dolores Sandmann  
County Extension Director  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Travis County

### Message from the Director:

### Remembering Our Rural Roots: Extension Services in Travis County

Please join us on Friday, October 24, as we celebrate 100 years of Extension at the seventh annual Travis County History Day. The event will be held at 700 Lavaca Street, Hall of Government, on the first floor. The program will start at 10:30 am with Samuel T. Biscoe, Travis County Judge, serving as the Master of Ceremonies. Guest Speaker will be Dr. Douglas Steele, Director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Best Wishes,  
-Dolores Sandmann



## Travis County Residents Step Up & Scale Down thru Extension Program

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Travis County launched its innovative Step Up & Scale Down weight management program June 2. The program, which was presented over 12 consecutive Mondays, lasted through the summer.

Thirty people signed up for the program, which was held at the AgriLife Extension office in Travis County, according to Sonia Coyle, AgriLife Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent. "The program is designed to guide participants toward a healthy weight through nutrition tips, exercise resources, a personalized weight-loss planner and much more," Coyle said. "Step Up and Scale Down is a research-based program that has proven successful in weight management and building healthy lifestyle habits."

She said in Travis County the success stories have been numerous and **participants lost a total of 165 pounds** over the program period. Participants brought canned and packaged foods to represent the amount of weight each lost during the program. The food was then donated to a food bank serving Travis County.



"We initiated this program in the summer as we felt this was a good time for people to jump-start their way to a healthier lifestyle," Coyle said. "We're hoping that the healthier eating habits and other behaviors they learned in the summer will continue through the holidays and beyond."

Participant testimonial: "I am cooking for the first time in my life (I am in my late forties) thanks to the recipe book I got in this program and the demonstration recipes we watched at the beginning of each meeting... I used to eat out all the time, now eating out is only for special occasions ... I learned how to eat less, to make exercise part of my life, and I lost 20 lbs.!" -A. Costa

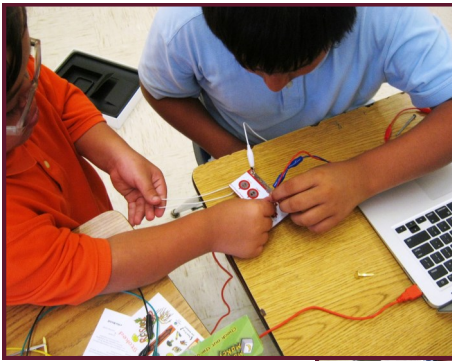
## 4-H CAPITAL Lights-up Youth Learning with *It's Electric* Summer Camps

This summer, 475 youth from area elementary and middle schools participated in 4-H CAPTIAL “It’s Electric!” camps, during which 434 sessions were held providing more than 36,150 contact hours.

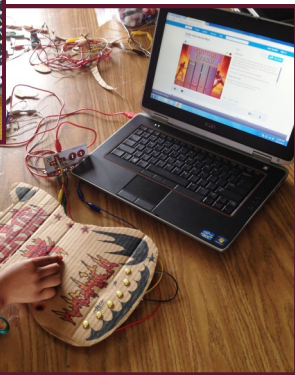
“During these camps, students learned about the basics of circuitry,” said Lydia Domaruk, Urban Youth Development Agent for Travis County. “Objectives of the camp included teaching students about the components required to complete an electric circuit, demonstrating how to complete a parallel or series circuit, showing how electricity is used in household appliances and describing the relationship between an electron and current electricity.

Domaruk said some of the camp activities that helped students reach these objectives were:

- E-textiles in which conductive thread was used to make light-up wristbands and other electric sewing projects.
- Creating a circuit board which the kids then adapted into their version of the game ‘Operation.’
- Using conductive clay to sculpt monsters with glowing eyes.
- Building game controllers for Guitar Hero.



“The goal of these camps is to make science fun and build student engagement in science,” Domaruk said.



She said the camps are designed to help increase student appreciation for science, build confidence in hands-on learning and to help young people develop an interest in science and possibly a science-oriented career.

“We want the kids who participated to not only engage in science, but learn to love it,” Domaruk said. “And through experiential and practical learning, we want them to know they can ‘do’ science and have fun at the same time.”

## 4-H Members get a Chance to ‘Govern’ at 4-H Congress

In July, more than 350 youth and adults from 4-H programs throughout the state walked to the capitol building in Austin to begin a mock legislative session, then headed into committee meetings and public hearings.

“Texas 4-H Congress is the premiere citizenship and leadership experience for Texas 4-H members between the ages of 15 and 18,” said Cory Talley, AgriLife Extension agent for 4-H and Youth Development in Travis County. “Texas 4-H Congress allows 4-H members to experience the law-making process firsthand by writing and submitting bills, then serving as a member of the House of Representatives or Senate, or as a member of the press or a lobbyist.”



From these roles, the 4-H members determine the fate of each bill submitted over the four-day event, Talley said. Travis County 4-H had six representatives attend this event: Anna Dolliver of Lakeway, Meredith Masi of Pflugerville, and Morgan Metcalf, Sofia Ramirez and Collin and Trent Warwick all of Austin.

Trent serves on the Texas 4-H technology team and served as a news broadcaster along with his team members to stream the event for families and friends to watch. Collin and Sofia were members of the press corps, documenting daily activities through a daily newsletter. Meredith served as a lobbyist, identifying certain bills and then lobbying members of the House and Senate to either pass or defeat the bill. Morgan and Anna served as members of the House and Senate and were assigned bills to debate.

“It is not all business suits and ties though,” Talley said. “The kids get to have some fun and slip on their dancing boots for nightly activities.”

She said Texas 4-H Congress provides participants with hands-on experience and allows them to become actively engaged in understanding the legislative process. “Learning by doing through this 4-H activity is an excellent way to enhance their learning process and broaden their knowledge,” she said.

## Turf Grass Beds Demonstrate Low-Water Usage

Drought has been a major issue across Texas, and the nation, for quite some time now. And even with some areas receiving rainfall recently, water conservation continues to be a priority for most Texans. Daphne Richards, County Extension Agent for Horticulture in Travis County, has been watching this trend and adjusting her educational programs to meet the needs of community residents looking for information on how to conserve water in their landscapes.

“It may have taken an extreme drought to make people realize just how precious a natural resource water is, but now that they’ve seen the reality of what could become a dire situation, most people are interested in conserving water wherever possible.” With this trend, many people want to change to turf species that use less water, or even remove their lawn altogether and replace it with low-water use landscape plants or hardscaping. However, research by Texas A&M turfgrass specialists has shown that most turf species can handle extended periods of drought with only minimal supplemental irrigation. “Turfgrass does not really need any more water than most other plants in the landscape; it just needs to be managed properly,” Richards said.

To illustrate this point, four turfgrass demonstration beds, with four different turf species, were installed at the Travis County Extension office. Each bed is watered once per week, following the current outdoor

watering restrictions in the city of Austin. The plan for next season, once the grass is fully established, is to cut back supplemental irrigation to once every other week, half of what is allowed, to show people that turf can survive on much less water than they think.

Many people are also becoming more interested in drip irrigation, so the turfgrass plots were built with subsurface drip during installation. Rather using traditional spray irrigation, common in most landscapes, subsurface drip systems provide water where the turfgrass needs it most, right in the root zone. And since the irrigation is protected from the environment, much less water is lost to evaporation due to wind and heat.

“Each bed is only four foot square, but it doesn’t take a lot of space to illustrate the concept,” Richards said. The four species planted are ‘Raleigh’ St. Augustine, ‘Celebration’ Bermuda, Palisades Zoysia and Buffalo.



## MEET THE STAFF: Stefan Hunt & Jacob Hetzel, Wildlife Services



Stefan Hunt began working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service -Wildlife Services in 2010 and started his current position as an Urban Wildlife Biologist for Travis County in September of 2012.

Hunt deals mainly with urban coyote issues by providing technical assistance and direct control measures to residents having issues with these animals, including giving tips and techniques on “hazing” coyotes and instruction on how to prevent interactions between coyotes and pets.

He graduated from Texas Tech University with a degree in Wildlife Management. His previous experience includes working on a home-range study for coyotes, bobcats and foxes, plus working as an Airport Biologist at the Naval Air Station-Kingsville.



Jacob Hetzel is an Urban Wildlife Biologist serving Austin and Travis County. He has been employed with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service-Wildlife Services for 9 years.

As a wildlife biologist, he provides technical assistance and direct control measures to individuals who are experiencing: property damage, economic loss, or human-health and safety issues related to wildlife, including raccoons, opossums, skunks, snakes, coyotes, feral hogs, birds and beavers.

Hetzel graduated from Texas A&M University with a bachelor’s degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. For information on urban and rural wildlife control call 512.854.9600.