

# Acknowledging Exceptional Service

## Quantity, Quality of CHC Accomplishments Awarded

By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator



Lavaca County Historical Commission members received the THC's 2012 Distinguished Service Award from County Judge Tramer J. Woytek.

Volunteer organizations are of great value, whatever the magnitude of their service. Though the impact of work performed by County Historical Commissions (CHC) may vary greatly, it is important to remember that different interests and accomplishments contribute to saving the history of Texas.

As with most volunteer networks, it is essential to acknowledge service “above and beyond” to honor outstanding efforts and illustrate the power of cohesive collaboration within an organization. While all service is

valued, there are some CHCs that distinguish themselves from others by their consistent effort and quality programming.

When selecting criteria with which to compare CHCs, we are often drawn to the leadership, and rightly so; quality leadership is required to sustain a healthy

body whatever the mission may be. However, many times it is the individual appointees who take a CHC from good to great.

Most CHCs flourish because a handful of people decide local history is important enough to dedicate time toward projects that record or interpret that history. The impact of CHCs greatly increases when a team of people decide to work together to engage their community in activities that celebrate history and save historic places.

The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) recognizes CHCs that set

themselves apart. In 2010, the Texas Historical Commission requested DSA criteria be established to elevate preservation efforts around the state and to emphasize the importance of sustaining healthy organizations. This request was made because CHCs continually reported a lack of interest in history within their county and the absence of potential volunteers.

The CHC Outreach Program was tasked with strengthening the CHCs' organizational structure to address these issues and encourage CHCs to build their volunteer capacity—to find ways to involve all appointees with responsibilities rather than only a few.

For this reason, the DSA criteria embodies statutory responsibilities that relate to organizational support and projects that demonstrate broad member support. CHCs who perform at this level are able to sustain long-term preservation programs that enrich regional and statewide preservation efforts. These are the CHCs that distinguish themselves from others.

To find out more about DSAs, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us) and search “Service Awards for CHCs.” ★

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