

Organizational Impact

CHCs Provide Opportunities to Educate and Influence

By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

Preservationists are passionate about history. We have received many calls from County Historical Commissions (CHC) related to personalities and differences of opinion within their organization. Managing the ideas and actions of these committed volunteers can occasionally be challenging.



Sally Abbe of the Lubbock CHC provides a positive face for preservation.

For this reason, we recommend starting each year with a celebration of past accomplishments and the anticipation of new opportunities. This is an excellent time to initiate a discussion to help refocus CHC appointees on your mission and collective responsibilities. The following ideas may help.

First and foremost, remember a CHC's state statutory mission: To protect, preserve, and promote cultural and historic resources in its county. While making organizational decisions, keep in mind the following core values associated with a CHC's mission:

- Promote stewardship of cultural and historic resources.
- Foster positive impressions for your CHC and for preservation.
- Provide quality service to the public.
- Maintain respectful interaction with others.
- Encourage public participation in CHC activities.
- Share your preservation successes with each other and our partners.

In addition, be sure to take time to acknowledge ongoing challenges and

discuss proactive solutions to address issues. Among the most common frustrations for CHC members is managing interactions with the public.

While we cannot control how others handle information, we can control how we respond as individuals. It is critical that we support one another and remember that an individual's work and attitude reflects on the commission as a whole.

Due to the elevated profile of many CHC appointees, they are often interviewed and asked to comment publicly. This county-appointed position may result in scrutiny similar to that applied to other county officials, which means that what you say, write, or do can shape the public's perception of the CHC and the preservation movement as a whole.

Consider public exchanges as an opportunity to share your history with others and let them know more about the important work accomplished by CHCs. Every time you are quoted, post a comment on the Internet, or publish a newsletter, you are granted a golden opportunity to educate, influence, and enrich lives through history. ★

The Medallion is published quarterly by the Texas Historical Commission. Address correspondence to: Managing Editor, *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276. Portions of the newsletter that are not copyrighted or reprinted from other sources may be reprinted with permission.

Contributions for the support of this publication are gratefully accepted. For information about alternate formats of this publication, contact the THC at 512.463.6255.

The Medallion is financed in part by a grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. All of the agency's public programs and activities are operated free from discrimination on

the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against should write to Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

The Medallion is available online at www.thc.state.tx.us/medallionmag/mddefault.shtml. If you would prefer to receive *The Medallion* electronically instead of through the mail, please send your name and address to thc@thc.state.tx.us. You will be notified by email when each new issue is available on the THC web site and will no longer receive a printed copy.

Our Mission

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.