Making Your Case
Cultivate Support in Tough Economic Times

By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

CHCs invest time and energy in the livelihood of Texas communities. However, CHCs must be able to explain how their work results in community revitalization so others understand the value of CHC service in these challenging economic times. The following questions address timely issues that CHCs must be able to answer.

What are some ways that CHCs promote economic development? CHC grant programs typically supplement larger efforts, which means the grants enable and encourage historic rehabilitations and other projects that may not otherwise occur. Likewise, stewardship of historic resources promoted by CHCs enhances the livability of a community, attracting new residents and visitors.

How do CHCs support Texas' tourism industry? CHC events—tours, festivals, and homecomings—engage residents and visitors, and create opportunities to highlight local organizations and businesses. Also, experiencing the sites

Pecos CHC appointees (from left) Barbara Kipgen and Betty Cash, along with Dwayne Cash attend a regional workshop in Fort Davis.

CHCs protect and promote are the reasons many people decide to spend weekends and vacations exploring Texas.

Why should counties allocate funding for CHCs? Here is a handy bit of information that may bolster your confidence when discussing the value of CHC service. The 2011 CHC annual reports showed that for every $1 counties invested in CHCs, a statewide average of $5 worth of service was returned. These numbers were determined by applying the Internal Revenue Service's volunteer rate to the cumulative CHC volunteer hours

reported for the 2011 year of service. Increasing this rate of return are the many grants, donations, fundraisers, and in-kind services contributed to CHCs by their partners. These numbers show that CHCs are a good investment.

How can CHCs convince others that preserving history benefits everyone? CHCs can expand their support base by discussing the impacts of their work in a region, county, city, business, or industry. CHCs should also find ways to enhance local events by providing a history component, activities, and expertise to other organizations.

People do not have to have a passion for history to be a passionate supporter of your CHC; they can be interested in diversifying the way a community generates economic development, or be interested in promoting tourism opportunities in connection with a CHC event. CHCs must communicate this connection and persuade others why their interests align with your accomplishments. ★

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.