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Complete Count Effort Starts

On May 2 at the George R. Brown Convention Center, City of Houston Mayor Bill White hosted the organizational meeting of Houston Counts, Houston's complete count committee for the 2010 census. Gabriel Sanchez, regional director of the Census Bureau's Dallas Regional Office, also participated, as did Council Member James Rodriguez. Reflecting the importance he places on this effort, White named himself chair of the committee, appointing Rodriguez vice chair. An estimated 150 people, several of whom participated in the complete count effort for the 2000 census, attended.

White has formed five subcommittees, each with two cochairs, of whom one is to be a council member:

- ❖ *Outreach:* Council Member Wanda Adams; Gracie Saenz, Winstead Attorneys. Will identify targeted communities and appropriate messages, and schedule and/or participate in neighborhood events.
- ❖ *Volunteer:* Margaret Wallace, Census Coordinator, City of Houston, acting chair. Will recruit, train, and supervise volunteers.
- ❖ *Business Partners:* Council Member M.J. Khan; Scott McClelland, HEB. Will develop relationships with local and national businesses and identify sponsorship opportunities.
- ❖ *Finance/Fundraising:* Council Member Anne Clutterbuck; Rick Jaramillo, Bank of America. Will raise money and solicit contributions to fund Houston Counts.
- ❖ *Publicity:* Council Member Melissa Noriega; D'Artagnan Bebel, Fox 26 and My20. Will investigate and advise on marketing and public relations.

Assuring as nearly complete a census count as possible, of course, is important because it means power and money—*power* through reapportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Texas Legislature, and Houston City Council (with two new districts), and *money* through the allocation of federal funding based on population counts. In FY07, according to The Brookings Institution, federal domestic assistance based on census counts totaled \$376.8 billion, or \$1,249 per capita nationwide. Texas ranked 46th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia with a per capita allocation of \$968.

Census Day is April 1, 2010, although data collection will begin as early as late January in many Alaskan villages, where the count must be completed before residents leave for seasonal hunting and fishing. State population counts for reapportioning the House of Representatives are required to be delivered to the President by January 1, 2011. Redistricting data are required to be delivered to the states by April 1, 2011.

If you're interested in joining Houston's complete count effort, please send an e-mail to houstoncounts@cityofhouston.net. ❖

An Interview with Paula Pipes, TEDA President

Earlier this year, TEDA board member and past president Christina Todd interviewed current president Paula Pipes. Excerpts from that interview:

Todd: Why did you join TEDA, and how does our economic and demographic focus connect with your career?

Pipes: I learned about TEDA from Karl Eschbach [then professor of sociology at the University of Houston, now Texas State Demographer and director of the Texas State Data Center]. After some 20 years in human resources, I decided to prepare for a mid-life career change with a sociology degree. Karl was one of my professors in graduate school at the University of Houston. Karl involved me in a presentation he was preparing for a TEDA meeting. After attending that meeting, I knew TEDA was a quality organization that could help me build a strong foundation in my new profession. I took advantage of TEDA's student discount and joined immediately.

The contacts and information that come to me through TEDA are valuable to me and my career both directly and indirectly. In addition to networking, through TEDA I learn about important resources that help me use primary tools such as Census Bureau data files. Since graduate school, my work has focused on both community-based organizations and immigration—first as a research associate at the University of Houston, now as a research consultant through Pipes Research Services. TEDA keeps me well-informed about the local context, which is so important for my work.

I also enjoy how TEDA presentations broaden my knowledge base. We are all so specialized—the monthly meetings keep me energized and learning about industries and issues that I might not otherwise hear much about.

Todd: You've served TEDA in several capacities, including member, board member, treasurer, and now president. Please tell us about your favorite TEDA memory.

Pipes: There have been times when I've felt particularly proud of a topic we addressed or a speaker we hosted. Of course, that relates to my overall respect for the wonderful people who have been guiding TEDA for many years before I became involved. Rather than a favorite memory, I guess I really enjoy the camaraderie on the board. Of course, we have some really spirited debates. But we also have a lot of good laughs—moments that wouldn't translate here, but they were funny at the time in ways that you only experience in the trenches with one another, so to speak.

Todd: What are you passionate about in your professional life?

Pipes: At the conceptual level, I feel strongly about using information to accomplish good. The social sciences offer some pretty powerful tools for interpreting and shaping the world around us. I think individuals and institutions should take seriously how they use these capabilities.

At a more personal level, I enjoy data—only a group such as ours can probably appreciate how I mean this. It always amazes me when you see clarity emerge from a mess of data.

Bringing these two points together in my own career, it's very gratifying to use my skills to help nonprofit organizations better understand their strengths and weaknesses. Of course, the trick is getting people to *apply* the information we provide.

Todd: What do you envision for TEDA in the future?

Pipes: I believe TEDA should, and will, continue to do what it does well—offer quality programs with broad appeal. To say that our organization focuses on economic and demographic issues is to say that we cover a wide territory. We serve a membership that spans many sectors and disciplines and includes

both users and producers of economic and demographic data. I think we do a good job of balancing our programs to meet the needs of this diverse constituency.

In the future, we might look for ways beyond workshops and monthly presentations to maximize our value to the region. For example, there are tremendous costs associated with data collection. TEDA might serve as a catalyst or a partner in developing ways to reduce data redundancy within and across sectors. I also think TEDA could have an increased role in generating discussions and disseminating information surrounding important policy issues. Both of these goals involve strengthening networks within the TEDA organization and enhancing TEDA's visibility.

Todd: Do you have any words of wisdom for new TEDA members?

Pipes: Given the knowledge and experience of our members, any words of wisdom from me seem a bit superfluous. I'll just share something I've learned about being involved in professional associations through both of my careers.

Active participation in an organization like TEDA is valuable in all stages of your career. By active participation, I mean serving on boards and committees, as well as regularly attending meetings. Starting out, board participation increases the networking you can accomplish by giving you more opportunity to interact in a personal and professional way with colleagues. Mid-career, when you're at a plateau and maybe even burned out, board responsibilities can help you gain new skills and keep things fresh and interesting. At the peak of your career, active participation allows you an opportunity to extend your involvement and to give something back to your profession. ❖

Census 2010 Tidbits

Terri Ann Lowenthal, an independent legislative and policy consultant working with a wide range of census stakeholders to promote an accurate 2010 census, produces *Census*

News Briefs, an occasional publication. Excerpts from recent issues:

- ❖ In the 2010 census, for the first time, the Census Bureau has a specific plan to contact traveling carnivals, circuses, and fairs, to determine where they will be on Census Day and to make arrangements to distribute census forms to their employees. Traveling workers will be allowed to designate their "usual place of residence"; those who don't will be counted as residents of the city in which their show or event is stationed on Census Day.
- ❖ The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, through its Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church, has become an official 2010 census partner and is urging its 25,000 parishes and missions to encourage census participation. Archbishop José Gomez of San Antonio noted that "some of the populations we serve tend to normally be undercounted"; other Conference officials cited the importance of an accurate count to the fair allocation of resources and political representation. In contrast to a call by some Latino evangelical clergy for undocumented immigrants to boycott the census..., Alejandro Aguilera, the Secretariat's assistant director for Hispanic Affairs, said in a statement, "We urge Hispanics/Latinos to make sure they are counted."
- ❖ Advocates for the gay community are challenging the Census Bureau's decision to recode married couples of the same sex as "unmarried partners" in the 2010 census relationship question. New York City Councilman Bill de Blasio introduced a resolution calling on the Census Bureau to publish data on same-sex couples who report that they are married. According to articles in *The New York Times* and other news outlets, the Census Bureau has determined that the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 prohibits it from tabulating data on marriages that are not between opposite-sex couples. Similarly, same-sex couples with children will not meet the Cen-

sus Bureau's definition of a "family" when the agency publishes data on families and households; the children will be considered part of a single-parent household. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund, calling the Census Bureau's tabulation policy "expensive and insulting" and "a holdover from the Bush Administration," is circulating a petition to Acting Census Director Thomas Mesenbourg, asking him "to reverse the Census Bureau's current policy and count all legally recognized marriages equally in the 2010 census—including those of same-sex couples."

At the May TEDA meeting, former Census Bureau director Steve Murdock, now a professor of sociology at Rice University, noted that the address canvassing for 2010 is ahead of schedule, thanks to a plethora of well-qualified workers eager for as many hours as they can work—a byproduct of the current recession that redounds to the benefit of census preparations. ❖

TEDA/Houston '08-'09 Calendar

Meetings (reception 5-5:30 p.m., presentation 5:30-6:30) are free to TEDA members and \$16 per person for guests (applicable toward dues if a guest joins TEDA/Houston the same day). All functions are at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Houston Branch, 1801 Allen Parkway.

Topics and speakers shown below are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, check the calendar at www.teda.org.

Jun. 18—Meeting

Today's Graduates and Tomorrow's Jobs—Match or Mismatch? • Ruben B. Garcia, Manager, Automated Student and Adult Learner Follow-Up System, Labor Market and Career Information, Texas Workforce Commission

Jul.? Aug.?—Program Planning Meeting

Annual luncheon meeting to plan programs for TEDA/Houston's '09-'10 program year. Look for an announcement of time and place soon in your e-mail or via USPS.

Sep. 17—Meeting

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones—Bane or Blessing for Houston? • Speakers TBA

'08-'09 TEDA/Houston Board of Directors

Terms Expiring in 2009

- ❖ Virginia Appl, Demographer, Magellan Consulting Services, 936-588-6626, virginia@magellanconsulting.com
- ❖ Skip Kasdorf, Greater Houston Partnership, **Secretary** and **Newsletter Editor**, 713-844-3615, kasdorf@houston.org
- ❖ John Stansfield, Consultant, 281-933-2588, jstansfield@pdq.net
- ❖ Christina Todd, Lone Star College System, 832-813-6628, christina.c.todd@lonestar.edu

Terms Expiring in 2010

- ❖ Max L. Beauregard, Demographics & GIS Consulting Services, 713-864-0549, mbeauregard@houston.rr.com
- ❖ Jim Hofmeister, Consultant, jimsuehofmeister@aol.com
- ❖ Barbara McCormick, 713-464-8802, barbaramc@earthlink.net
- ❖ Dmitry Messen, Ph.D., Forecast Program Manager, Houston-Galveston Area Council, 713-993-4535, Dmitry.Messen@h-gac.com

Terms Expiring in 2011

- ❖ Bala Balachandran, Planning & Development Dept., City of Houston, **Vice President**, 713-837-7839, bala.balachandran@cityofhouston.net
- ❖ Margaret Drain, Houston Community College System, 713-718-8628, margaret.drain@hccs.edu
- ❖ Paula Pipes, Pipes Research Services, **President**, 713-467-4223, paula@pipesresearch.com
- ❖ Vincent Sanders, METRO, **Treasurer**, 713-739-3867, VS02@ridemetro.org

Visit TEDA/Houston at www.teda.org

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