

FROM THE OFFICE OF
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County Eye Newsletter

Grant funding gives Kerr County the opportunity to offer services and complete projects that benefit the county residents each year. Some grants require matching funds that are sometimes provided through in-kind activities while other grants involve a cash match.

Currently Kerr County has benefited from millions of dollars of grants from the Texas Water Development Board and federal Community Development Block Grant funds to build the Kerrville South Wastewater Project, now in its final phase of construction. The project has replaced failing septic systems along Rancho Road and Camp Meeting Creek that compromised the waters of the Guadalupe River in Kerrville for many years.

Additional grant funds from those sources will soon be available for the construction of the East Kerr County Wastewater Project that will get hundreds of homes in Center Point and areas between there and Comfort off septic dependency and thereby improve the water quality of the Guadalupe River downstream from Kerrville.

A part of the matching grant funds for both projects was also provided by the Upper Guadalupe River Authority. UGRA has been a major stakeholder in the protection of the river and its tributaries since its creation in the 1930s.

Kerr County through its Environmental Health Department licenses and monitors septic systems countywide based on state guidelines established by the Texas Commission on Environment Quality (TCEQ) and adopted by Kerr County Commissioners' Court.

Another grant recently submitted by the county through the Environmental Health Department to the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) will provide funding for the county to assume management and execution of a community hazardous waste collection program that was managed by the City of Kerrville for the past several years.

The funding will allow the county to sponsor a collection day that will allow both county and city residents to bring hazardous household items such as paint, household cleaning products, lawn and garden products, and other hazardous waste to a central location on a Saturday this fall.

Preliminary plans are to have the event at the Hill Country Youth Event Center rather than the county owned old recycling center on McFarland Street. More details will be released once the event funding is secured.

Grant funding from the federal government, primarily from federal block grants, is channeled through the Office of the Governor and currently funds the Victim Rights' Coordinator program in addition to grants to Hill Country Cares, Kids' Advocacy Place and CASA.

These programs are funded through the General Victim Services (GVA) allotment of the federal funding provided to the governor's office. Funding for victim services at the national level began during the Reagan presidency in the 1980's and has continued since that time.

For three years an juvenile grant through the governor's office funded the Youth Averted from Delinquency (YAD) program contracted by the county to the local Baptist Child and Family Services

program. The YAD programs targets youth in crisis and provides counseling and intervention services to children and their families who enter into the juvenile justice system.

This year the program has been funded by local grants and other sources after last year's grant application failed to get funded. The grant is funded through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention program (JJDP) but those funds have dramatically decreased in recent funding years.

A new grant application has been submitted for funding for next year. The program has been incredibly successful with local youth over the past 4 years in diverting them from criminal activity and redirecting them to more positive lifestyles but without the federal grant funding through the governor's office the program will be endangered.

Local law enforcement agencies have also been recipients of several major state and federal grants over recent years that have helped them upgrade equipment, provide officer training and a variety of other positive additions to law enforcement agencies in our area.

This year the county has submitted a grant to help fund the new County Emergency Management Coordinator position through the Homeland Security grant program.

Announcement of successful grant funding for grants from the governor's office doesn't usually come until middle to late summer, late into the county's budget planning for the upcoming fiscal year.

Grant funding is an important element of providing services that will benefit the community and Kerr County continues to actively seek those funds to defray the use of local tax dollars to fund the programs. It's a win-win situation for everyone involved when grant money can be secured.