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March 5, 2010

TO: Greenville Herald Banner
Tawakoni News
Country World News
Wolfe City Mirror
Commerce Journal
Kuumba Heritage
Celeste Tribune
Lone Oak Newsletter

FROM: Sara Allen
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
Hunt County

SUBJECT: Weekly News Column - Extension Notebook

Hunt County Master Gardeners are an integral part of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Hunt County. This organization works through many projects and activities to expand horticultural knowledge throughout the county to those interested in growing landscapes and gardens.

The Master Gardeners recently presented the Hunt County Commissioners Court with a “mock check” for the value of the volunteer service they provided citizens of Hunt County for their time during 2009. Amazingly, this amount was over \$107,000 for 5312 hours of service.

This was accomplished in a variety of ways. Several of the projects conducted by the volunteers are well known in the community. A major contribution is the Heritage Garden. Located on Washington Street east of the courthouse, the Heritage Garden features growing practices and plants adapted to Hunt County. Visitors are welcome at any time to learn more about what plants to use in our area. Several times per year, seminars are held in the Heritage

Garden on related subjects. During 2010, look for events in June and October on Perennials and Fall Vegetable Gardening.

Another well known service of the group is their Speakers Bureau. Master Gardeners are available to speak to civic clubs and other organizations on a variety of horticultural subjects. Simply contact the Hunt County Extension Office to book a speaker for your group.

Education is the key objective of the volunteer program. Seminars are held quarterly with the W. Walworth Harrison Public Library in an event called the Art of Gardening Seminars. Upcoming topics for 2010 include Growing Tomatoes, Water Wise Gardening, and ABC's of Roses, on the third Thursday of April, July and October respectively at 6 pm at the Fletcher Warren Civic Center.

Other annual events include a Plant Swap and Garden Tour in May, booths at the YMCA Healthy Kids Day in April, Keep Greenville Beautiful Home and Garden Show in May, and Hunt County Fair in June. Master Gardeners also write weekly newspaper articles, answer clientele questions in the Extension Office, and assist with a variety of community improvement projects.

I honor this group today not only for the value of service they provide to the citizens of Hunt County, but for the quality education they share through their volunteer service with all in our county. If you are interested in the Master Gardener program, please contact the Hunt County Extension Office, 903-455-9885.

PHOTO CUTLINE: Hunt County Master Gardener Association President Byron Chitwood presents County Judge John Horn with a "mock check" in acknowledgment of the \$107,000 of volunteer time contributed by the Master Gardeners to Hunt County in 2009. The presentation was made to the Hunt County Commissioners Court, where the court honored Master Gardeners with a Certificate of Appreciation.