

Green Summit 2009
The McFaddin-Ward House, host
April 22, 2009 at the Broussard's Centre`

“The Green Summit has been convened to bring together leaders in the areas of city government, business and industry, civic and social organizations, education, and the non-profit community to discuss, in a free and open atmosphere, current and future projects leading to a clean, more attractive, and eco-friendly Beaumont.”

Summit Report:

April 22 will be known as a “Green Letter” day for the McFaddin-Ward House, because that date marks both Earth Day and the museum’s first Green Summit. The museum hosted sixty community leaders at the Broussard Centre` to discuss ideas for Beaumont to be a more visually-appealing and eco-friendly place to live and to visit.

In director Matt White’s letter to the invited guests, he explained the museum’s role in initiating the Green Summit, “Recognizing the role museums play as places where people can gather for the free and open expression of ideas, and as places to create dialog on issues of common interest to the citizens we serve, the McFaddin-Ward House examined its mission statement. In doing so, we realized that we had a responsibility to our city to make ourselves available as a central processing point for those interested in landscaping and beautification projects; clean community projects that promote anti-litter, anti-graffiti, and general clean-up; and potentially, many other green initiatives.”

Events of the Day

The Summit began with welcoming the attendees and restating the mission of the summit. Matt welcomed Beaumont Mayor Becky Ames, who spoke of her passion for a more beautiful Beaumont and who arranged to have the City of Beaumont department managers anchor a panel discussion of the City’s improvement efforts. Matt introduced the Summit facilitator, Jennifer Walsh from TOTAL Port Arthur Refinery. Jennifer overviewed the goals of the Summit and its format.

The Topics

The open-forum format included two break-out sessions and a convening summary. The first breakout was split among the topics:

- Beautification/Landscape Efforts,
- Clean Community Initiatives, and
- Eco-Friendly Projects.

Discussions from these sessions determined the second breakout ad hoc topics:

- Education & Marketing Campaigns,
- Wants & Needs for Current Projects, and
- Partnering.

After the two breakout sessions, the top administration of the City of Beaumont anchored a panel to describe their efforts in bettering Beaumont and offered a “no topic is off limits” question and answer period for the attendees.

- Kyle Hayes, City Manager
- Chris Boone, Director of Community Development
- Tom Warner, Director of Public Works
- Jim Thompson, Director of Parks and Recreation

At the summit’s conclusion, Jennifer summarized the discussions and Matt developed an accord agreement. Matt committed the museum for three years to act as an intermediary to facilitate action and foster collaborative ventures.

The Team

Each attendee received a Green Summit notebook containing contact and resource materials and a recyclable bag filled with donated items related to greening of the community. Among the organizations that donated the materials were:

- The City of Beaumont and the Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Broussard’s Centre`
- H-E-B
- Market Basket
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Texas General Land Office
- VIP Magazine
- Kirksey’s Printing

The entire museum staff was involved in the success of the Green Summit, from planning to execution. Among the many duties were anchoring or scribing the sessions, organizing the registration, and developing the handouts.

Special recognition was attributed to the immense support of the McFaddin-Ward House Board of Directors and the Mamie McFaddin Ward Heritage Foundation that generously underwrote the summit.



BEAUTIFICATION/LANDSCAPE

In this session, attendees discussed their projects and their projects’ aims, offered advice and encouragement on continuing the efforts.

- Oaks Historic District has Saturday “Preservation Bash” to raise money for improving their neighborhood. The Magnolia Club offered 200 trees.
- Kelly High School has “The People Speak” a school-age national program for students to be involved with beautification/clean-up projects, and petitions. The group is looking for projects.
- Groups that are active in Beautification efforts: Magnolia Garden Club, Plant Beaumont, Sierra Club, Master Gardeners, Green Fund, and Junior Gardeners Program.
- Beautify Beaumont Inc. efforts of beautification and recycling and tree planting were described. Goal is to plant 1500 trees by 2015 and start observing Arbor Day from January 2010 on.
- Sierra Club meets first Tuesday at 7pm at Gander Mountain, and the possibility of marking John Muir’s birthday, April 21 (he is early advocate of preservation of U.S. wilderness).
- City Neighborhood Commission efforts were made known.
- VIP Magazine requested information on beautification to be sent to his attention with a 60-day lead time for possible inclusion in the magazine.
- Agricultural County Committee discussed the importance of selecting plant sustainability when planting.
- Jefferson County Extension has EarthKind, a landscaping program.
- Tyrrell Park holds Block Parties for clean-up and awareness.
- The Master Gardeners offer Rain Water Harvesting information, a Farmers’ Market, and has access to county and state educational resources.
- TXDOT has 75 groups involved with Adopt-a-Highway and it is active with tree plantings.
- The Texas Energy Museum has installed solar panels and trees on its walkway.
- The Southeast Texas Kayak & Canoe Club does some clean-up.

Desired Outcome:

Create a Green Calendar online because of the huge need for us all to know what we are all doing.

Why should the McFaddin-Ward House museum devote its resources to a three-year project? Besides continuing Mamie McFaddin Ward’s examples from her Magnolia Garden Club’s beautification efforts, the McFaddin-Ward House staff, volunteers and directors, along with every summit participant and the entire citizenry of Beaumont, will benefit from a clean and attractive city that we are proud to call home and proud to have strangers visit.

CLEAN COMMUNITY / ANTI-LITTERING

In this forum, participants discussed the projects or areas where they could make a difference, as well as listed ideas for success.

- The City of Beaumont, among a many projects, active Anti-litter enforcement program and is focused on reducing dumping debris.
- Region V can help with getting information to the schools.
- Lamar University has Clean up/ anti litter efforts on campus.
- Old Town has Clean up sites and days.
- Time Warner is willing to run PSA’s and be a media contact.
- Sierra Club gives out trees; is active with anti-litter campaigns; offers Operation “Green Streets.”
- The Neighborhood Associations are involved with “Clean Beaumont” and stresses a neighborhood cleanup twice a year.
- The Keep Beaumont Beautiful Commission has worked with the “Fight Dirty” website, litter pick-up, adopt a street program, and provided plantings. The Commission is developing a website to connect the organizations involved and is open to ideas for the site and to advertise what they are doing.
- Chamber of Commerce wants to help make area more attractive.
- Boys Scouts of America teaches “leave no trace” and does tree planting.
- The City’s Parks and Recreation Dept focuses on litter and graffiti.
- The SETX Regional Planning Commission has an Anti-litter campaign “ Stop Littering-Keep SETX Clean”; recognizes businesses that clean up area around their places of business; offers Anti-littering education; teaches people about “Green Bag” use; working on an anti-cigarette butts effort and more; is getting information into schools; would like to know how to get word out to more people.
- Kelly High School sponsors a Clean Campus effort.
- Entergy wants to get behind cleaning up the area.

Desired outcomes:

McFaddin-Ward House wants to provide Anti-litter programs and would like to target schools and be the clearing house for information.

- Provide an easy way to locate SPONSORS who are willing to help fund projects.
- Look for ways to combine efforts into one campaign.
- Target problem areas.
- Set high standards.
- Get out-of-town workers to care.
- Get area restaurants to be part of the anti-litter campaign.
- Be sophisticated in our message.
- Strive to work together.

ECO FRIENDLY

In this session, attendees discussed their projects, some which are available to the public, and the projects' aims.

- Agri-Life services from the County Extension Office are free.
- 6 agents in Jefferson County involved with a Testing Water presentation.
- SETX Regional Planning Commission has a focus on Energy Conservation.
- Sierra Club has Cool City programs.
- Senator Tommy Williams Office wants to have a presence in this area.
- Lamar Continuing Education and Cardinal River Adventures has a goal to get people outdoors; offers a curriculum on water and vegetation; and wants to start a Project Wet which exists in some states to promote water conservation.
- Caldwell Neighborhood Association is active in Recycling and in picking up others' trash
- Westbrook High School is working on a program to sell recycled food (can't do this now because of Federal funds); wants to introduce an environmental science class in the curriculum when the state reviews the state standards.
- Eco Broker is showing how an Eco-friendly home can be advantageous to sell or buy.
- Entergy has Energy Efficient programs, e.g. weatherstripping, lighting, energy savings.
- Lamar Environmental Science Dept has a 10-day field course, which includes touring refineries and focuses on air, water, alternative energy resources.
- Jason project funded by Exxon Mobil and is offered to Grades 4-8.
- AMSET (Art Museum of Southeast Texas) uses recycled materials in art projects and offers outreach programs.
- Beaumont Heritage Society is planting a garden for camp program.
- Kelly High School has "People Speak," dealing with global warming where students do clean-up, plant trees and such. Kelly will help with community projects.
- Spindletop Rotary will take on community projects.
- Region V Programs can be involved.

Desired Outcomes

In Beaumont it is not easy to get rid of recyclables and a city of this size should have a more convenient to recycle.

Could put recycling bins at all schools.

Provide a Hazardous waste drop-off.

Create a Splash event because Splash focuses on water of all kinds – Splash Day can make people more aware about water. Need an easy way to find partners and available money.

Create Bumper Stickers to help with the awareness.

Try Contests to motivate people toward Eco-Friendly projects.

Could use schools as pick-up points for antifreeze, oil, etc.

Create a market – buy recycled goods.

Prefer compost instead of fertilizer. Support Organic Farming.

Get programs started in schools so kids will become recycling adults.

Educate families. Can start with parents, perhaps through organization they belong to, or have kids involved in eco-friendly ways.

EDUCATION / MARKETING PROGRAMS

From the earlier session, the discussion of how to get the word out on these programs became apparent. This group collaborated on compiling suggestions on how to find help, how to educate, what approaches to take, etc.

- Earth & Space Sciences Lamar stressed that students are a captive audience and to get children involved first as they can educate the adults.
- When wanting to involve the schools, it is vital to tie into the TAKS test and to go to the Department heads instead of Administrators. Need to get the teachers to buy in.
- Universities can provide programs.
- Beauty demands respect. We can get a clean environment through good marketing. Doesn't do much good to discuss recycling unless we make the effort to select products with minimal packing to begin with.
- Call Senator Williams with ideas or with assistance.
- Region V could be very helpful in getting programs into schools, as it may not be efficient to try to go thru schools directly.
- "Visions" publication comes out 3 times a year and is good way to learn ways to blend in with the curriculum. Can be found on the Region V website.
- "Fight Dirty" may not be the best slogan for elementary children because of the negative connotations of "fighting" and "dirty."
- Master Gardeners suggested several outlets for getting the word out: radio show, tv weekly spots, community calendars, media websites.
- Need to let people know and keep them updated through NP websites, etc.,
- Make it a popular topic to get people involved.
- VIP Magazine urged people to turn the project into a "reader's piece," or "tell stories of the lifestyles. Send information by email with contact information 60-90 days lead time or calendar 30 days prior. Let people know as soon as possible. VIP has a one-sheet about how to pitch to media
- CVB Board explained the need to reach out to restaurants to raise awareness on anti-litter and smoking. Because so many out-of-towners have no genuine concern for the area, we need to organize businesses to help with awareness. To strengthen our efforts, we need to unite to develop a unified program, rather than scatter our efforts.
- Kelly High School pointed out to "think out of the box" to reach young people, e.g. public service ads, or Facebook, Blogs, or other new-technology outlets.
- City of Beaumont knows there is great interest in recycling, but has to work through the costs and accessibility issues.
- Start with projects to interest students before bombarding them with education on the issues, e.g. Kits to grow tomatoes in a small space to students.
- Are their grants or a private entity to support recycling, buying trucks etc., to help city with expenses?
- Provide Demonstrations on energy conservation.
- Beaumont Heritage Society finds it very difficult to get information out to groups.

(con't)

EDUCATION / MARKETING PROGRAMS (con't)

- Texas Energy Museum pointed out that it is a myth that the petroleum industry is anti-environmental. Working on a Coastal Environment Exhibit "Oil 150" for the 150th anniversary of discovery of oil in the U.S. Also, has a "Petroleum 101," unit on the introduction of petroleum.
- Lamar University wants to target the ones who are causing the problems, such as students living in the dorms, and the need to establish boundaries for visitors with their trash.
- Entergy sponsors advertisement programs.
- SETX Regional Planning Commission recommends the faith-based organizations in campaigns.
- Sierra Club encourages everyone to contact the media to run PSAs and to locate help with the production costs by using company equipment or places as LU Communications, or accepting finished commercials or ads from outside sources.

WANTS AND NEEDS & PARTNERING

From the earlier break-out groups, it became apparent that people wanted a method to broadcast their needs to propel their projects along.

- Lamar – Cardinal River Adventures would like to do a "Splash Day"; needs volunteers to go to parks with water features or splash parks; educational piece; activities for families; get organizations to adopt a park to get volunteers.
- BEAUTIFY BEAUMONT plans to have an Arbor Day next January (4th Saturday) to give out and plant trees; needs volunteers and donations.
- "Waste in Place" has curriculum and books and needs someone to train teachers on the program.
- Kelly High School debaters debates on topics of conservation, recycling, etc.; has students who need volunteer hours ; Key Club Need 25 service hours per year.
- 4-H is looking for projects.
- Westbrook High School wants to expand its Recycle efforts and wants to find ways to get trash out of schools. Teachers should be focused to implement programs; Sets up an Earth Day celebration each year.
- Need to create a Beaumont Green List.
- Hazardous waste collection days – needs volunteers to help
- On the SETX Regional Planning Commission website for information.
- Through the Neighborhood Association picnics, information to educate on litter could be distributed. Need the information to hand out.
- Community Development supports Adopt-a-Block.
- If want to contact Rotary Club and other service organizations, best way to get help is to talk to the incoming president.
- City of Beaumont can help with clean-up days.
- TXDOT wants to build a bridge by cooperating with other groups.
- What can be done with the East Tex Freeway/Cardinal Drive, esp with trucks with unsecure loads? Could students come up with a concept for trash pickup?
- Speak to the Zoning Dept of the City to adopt a street or cub.
- City has planted tree seedlings on a farm.

THE "GREEN SUMMIT" EVALUATIONS

1 "Best Parts"

- Meeting such a great & varied group with a mix of great ideas
- Information shared by the City of Beaumont panel & Businesses about their programs.
- The participation, enthusiasm and information about ongoing projects.
- Very well organized! Good group, everyone had good ideas to share.
- I can't pick just one thing.
- Idea sharing (break outs)
- City Panel was good – to know what the city is doing.
- Diversity of audience
- Everyone united that has a common goal.
- The mere fact that it happened here in Beaumont. Jennifer was great speaker.
- Learned a lot about a variety of activities.
- Breaking up into smaller groups.

2 "Next Year"

- Progress report.
- Programs for educators specifically
- A solution to the questions & problems mentioned today!
- Businesses that provides energy efficient products for homes & businesses.
- Someone from the recycling center.
- I hope it will be a little easier to meet everyone & trade contact info or possibly be guided in the direction of those that would be of a particular interest or help to my organization.
- A report on what pro-environmental programs the city government is overseeing.
- More collaborative efforts. Detailed plans for landscaping.
- Review progress made since this year. Include State legislators.
- We have an "action plan" to move forward with.
- More opportunity to talk in group sessions. I didn't get to speak to everyone.
- More "green" issues/solutions – less beautification/trees
- Maybe multiple summits per year to keep current on "green" news.
- More success stories.
- The same thing, hopefully more publicity before hand to get more groups/individuals involved.

The McFaddin-Ward House pledges to continue the beautification process, to keep the stakeholders informed, and to provide contact information in order to build upon the success of the initial Green Summit.