

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 6, 2012

**TO:** District IV County 4-H Coordinators  
District IV County ID's

**FROM:** Derrick Bruton  
Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist

**SUBJECT:** 2012 Texas 4-H Congress Announcement

## OVERVIEW

The 2012 Texas 4-H Congress will be held in Austin. The headquarters for Texas 4-H Congress will be at the Sheraton Hotel, 707 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

Texas 4-H Congress is a four-day mock legislative experience for 4-H members ages 15 (at the time of the event) to 18. During this time, the 4-H members assume the roles of senators, representatives, lobbyists, press corps, and special interest groups to gain a first-hand understanding of how the legislative process works. Bills that are written and sponsored by 4-H members focus on issues concerning Texas and Texas youth. These bills are assigned to the appropriate committee and then debated in committee meetings and then on the floor of the House or Senate. If a bill is successful in negotiation and the legislative debate in all three stages, it is delivered to the Governor of the Texas 4-H Congress for his or her signature or veto. Copies of all the bills that are signed into law during Texas 4-H Congress are provided to the Office of Governor Rick Perry for his review.

Texas 4-H Congress is a premiere leadership program that is co-planned and co-implemented by the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Office and the Texas 4-H Council. The Texas 4-H Council, which consists of elected delegates from each district within the state, assumes many of the leadership responsibilities.

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## **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE**

### **House or Senate Member:**

These roles are primarily for 4-H members that have never participated in Texas 4-H Congress. Four-H members serving in the House or Senate should be prepared and able to speak passionately about issues effecting Texas and Texas Youth. The issues that the 4-H member will be speaking about may or may not be related to the subject matter of the bill they submitted. House and Senate members will be participating in a variety of professional settings such as committee meetings, chamber sessions, and may be lobbied or questioned on different issues by the Lobbyist group and/or the Press Corps. These assignments are made by the State 4-H Office.

*Total Number of House and Senate members allotted to participate:* 238  
(See quota set for District IV and Urban Counties)

### **Texas 4-H Council Member:**

Texas 4-H Council Members will assume leadership positions throughout Texas 4-H Congress. All Texas 4-H Council members are required to arrive in Austin on Friday, July 13 between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Texas 4-H Council members will be involved in an in-depth training and planning these two days prior to 4-H Congress in order to be able to effectively conduct the necessary business. It is a requirement that ALL Texas 4-H Council members participate fully in Texas 4-H Congress in order to attend (beginning on Friday and ending on Wednesday).

*Total Number of Texas 4-H Council Members allotted to participate:* 33

### **Lobbyist:**

The Lobbyist group is designed for 4-H members who have attended Texas 4-H Congress in either 2006 or 2008. The responsibility of the Lobbyist group is to identify certain bills and then lobby members of the House and Senate to either pass or defeat the bill. Lobbyist should be knowledgeable about Texas 4-H Congress and the schedule that it follows. Lobbyist members should be prepared to and have the ability to approach other 4-H members and persuade House and Senate members for support. The Lobbyist group will hold a "by invitation only" reception for House and Senate Members, along with Congress Leadership.

Applications to be considered for a Lobbyists position will be submitted through the 4-H CONNECT registration program. The application process will open on April 1, 2012 and will close on April 30, 2012. This time frame allows for time for youth to complete the application and then be notified if they will serve in the Lobbyist role, or be considered for another role in Texas 4-H Congress.

*Total Number of Lobbyist allotted to participate:* up to 25

### **Press Corps:**

The Texas 4-H Congress Press Corps play an extremely important part in the success of the event. Press Corps members can be either first time or returning 4-H members to 4-H Congress. Individuals applying for Press Corps should have strong skills in writing, word processing, interviewing, photography, and focused on making deadlines. The press corps is responsible for the publishing of a daily newspaper and helping maintaining a web

page/electronic communication. Press Corps members should be aware that sometimes they may not be able to attend certain events because of print deadlines. Two Texas 4-H Council members and up to 15 4-H members from across the State will serve on the 2012 Texas 4-H Congress Press Corps.

Applications to be considered for a Press Corps position will be submitted through the 4-H CONNECT registration program. The application process will open on April 1, 2012 and will close on April 30, 2012. This time frame allows for time for youth to complete the application and then be notified if they will serve in the Press Corps, or be considered for another role in Texas 4-H Congress.

*Total Number of Press Corps members allotted to participate: up to 15*

### **Technology Team:**

Up to four (4) members from the Texas 4-H Technology Team will be selected by the group's adult leadership to participate in the 2012 Texas 4-H Congress. These individuals will be responsible for assisting with webpage publication, videotaping, streaming video, podcasting, and other technology based tasks.

*Total Number of Technology Team members allotted to participate: 4*

### **Chaperones:**

Two adult chaperones from District IV will be serving in an official role at Texas 4-H Congress. Those chaperones are the two district council advisors Phyllis Griffin (CEA 4-H, Cooke County) and Chris Schraeder (CEA 4-H, Collin County). Additional chaperones will not be accepted.

## **TRAVEL DAYS, TIMES, AND COSTS**

Travel Start Date: Sunday, July 15, 2012. Capitol Tours will take place between 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. The district office will coordinate a specific time and place to meet once the tour has been confirmed. A message will be sent prior to Congress informing registrants about the details.

Travel End Date: Wednesday, July 18, 2012. All delegates must be departed from the event by 10:00 a.m.

Travel expenses are not covered in the registration fee of this event. Each participant is responsible for coordinating his/her own travel to and from the event.

## **DRESS CODE**

Since this is such a prestigious event and the 4-H members will be on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate, a coat and tie are to be worn by all males and professional style dresses are to be worn by female's at all official legislative events. Attire for the nightly dances must adhere to the Texas 4-H Dress Philosophy. Attire for the theme party must be in line with the theme and presented in a non-offensive manner.

## Texas 4-H Dress Code Violations



### REQUIRED FORMS

All necessary forms for Texas 4-H Congress will be attached to the delegates registration receipt through 4-H CONNECT, as well as being posted on the Texas 4-H Congress website. These forms can be accessed at any time after they have successfully completed their registration.

### SUBMISSION OF LEGISLATIVE BILLS

For 2012, anyone who wants to submit a bill can do so, regardless if they are attending Texas 4-H Congress. This change is to encourage all 4-H members, regardless of Congress participation and age, the opportunity to participate in an exercise in civic engagement. For those counties that do have at least one person attending Texas 4-H Congress, it is a requirement that at least one bill be submitted (this includes Texas 4-H Council, Tech Team, etc). To accomplish the writing and submission of legislative bills it is recommended that the County Extension Agent, or a volunteer, assist the youth in learning about what a quality bill is, how to write one, and then submitting the bill on-line.

To assist 4-H members with the process of preparing a bill for submission, refer to the Texas 4-H publication entitled "Understanding the Texas Legislative Process, A Guide for Participating in Texas 4-H Congress." Publication will be located under the publication page of the Texas 4-H website, as well as on the Texas 4-H Congress website.

All bills will be submitted on-line through the Texas 4-H website. Submission dates for all bills will from May 1, 2012 to June 16, 2012.

## **COST**

Registration costs will be as follows:

House/Senate/Press Corps/Lobbyist	\$340.00
Texas 4-H Council	\$340.00
Technology Team Members	\$340.00
Assigned CEA Chaperones	\$ 0.00

Registration costs include: hotel, meals & snacks, and registration fee. Other costs that delegates may experience that are NOT included in the above fee includes: transportation to and from Austin, meals en route to and from Austin, three (3) breakfast meals while in Austin, and incidental spending money.

The registration cost of \$340.00 is due in part to the assistance of more than \$75,000.00 from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the R.S.M.I.S. Foundation, Ed Rachal Foundation, and Blue Bell Creameries. Without these gracious donors, the registration cost would be more than \$450.00 per person.

## **TEXAS 4-H CONGRESS CALENDAR**

February 2012	Announcement letter
April 1, 2012	Lobbyist Application opens online via 4-H CONNECT
April 1, 2012	Press Corps Application opens online via 4-H CONNECT
April 30, 2012	Lobbyist Application closes
April 30, 2012	Press Corps Application closes
May 1, 2012	Bill submission on-line opens
May 20, 2012	Press Corps and Lobbyist notification
May 20, 2012	Online Registration opens via 4-H CONNECT
June 16, 2012	Bill submission on-line closes
June 16, 2012	Online Registration closes
July, 2012	District Travel Letters
July, 2012	Bill Book posted online
July 13, 2012	Texas 4-H Council and Management Team Arrives
July 15, 2012	District Delegates Arrive

## THEME PARTY

The 2012 Texas 4-H Council has selected "Hopping Fifties!". Delegates are encouraged to roll up their pants, slick back their hair, and put the poodle skirt on and enjoy an evening at the soda fountain! This night will be one of jitterbug, ice cream floats, and hula hoop's as 4-H members roll up to the soda shop and dine on food from the 50's. The Internet can provide a wealth of information for 4-H members to use in designing their costume. Prizes will be awarded in several categories of dress, contests and role-play!

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Texas 4-H Congress will have a community service project assisting one of the local charities. The City of Austin has been a great host to Texas 4-H Congress for more than twenty years. To show our appreciation and the purpose of "making the best better" a service project supporting the Dell Children's Hospital will be held during Texas 4-H Congress.

Dell Children's Hospital at University Medical Center Brackenridge is in need of **NEW** or **GENTLY USED** children's books and DVD movies (up to PG13). They are especially in need of books for children under the age of two (2) years of age. The majority of their young patients are under the age of two and 'reader books' or 'board books' are really needed for this audience.

The district that brings the most quality items will win a Pizza Party on Tuesday night of Texas 4-H Congress.

## AGE ELIGIBILITY

Official ages for Texas 4-H Congress are 15 (at the time of the event) to 18 years of age. This is a prestigious event reserved for older 4-H members. Because of the number of 4-H members allowed to attend, counties should make it a priority to select 4-H members for the House and Senate that have never attended prior.

## ELIGIBLE YOUTH

As the demographics of Texas change, so does the need to mirror those changes through Texas 4-H Congress. According to the 2000 census, Texas has experienced a greater increase in the urban population versus the rural population. This population shift has resulted in the majority of state's legislative power being centralized in the urban counties. Therefore, the 2012 Texas 4-H Congress will reflect this shift while striving to increase and provide greater opportunity for minority representation. If the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program is able to accomplish the below district quota system, this will provide an additional challenge for our youth to pass legislation that is to affect just a rural or urban area.

## **DISTRICT / COUNTY QUOTAS**

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>Delegate Quota (House/Senate Member)</b>	<b>URBAN COUNTY</b>	<b>Delegate Quota (House/Senate Member)</b>	<b>URBAN COUNTY</b>	<b>Delegate Quota (House/Senate Member)</b>
District 4	18	Dallas	2	Tarrant	2

Quotas listed above are for House of Representatives and Senate members. The quota does not include Texas 4-H Council, Texas 4-H Technology Team, Press Crops, and/or Lobbyist members. If House/Senate registrations exceed our district quota, the district 4-H leadership team will select individuals to represent District IV. The decision will be based upon age, years in 4-H, quality of bill submitted, recommendations from his/her County Extension Agent, and prior participation (preference will be to those who have never participated). The remaining delegates above our quota will be placed on an alternate list. Should there be openings after the initial deadline, those alternate individual's registrations will then be accepted.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH DELEGATES**

The Texas 4-H and Youth Development Office will mail to each delegate after the close of registration final information about Texas 4-H Congress and how to plan and prepare for the event. Copies of all communications will be sent via e-mail to county and district offices.

Please feel free to contact the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Office at 979.845.1212 or myself at 972-952-9264 if you have any questions about Texas 4-H Congress.

DB

cc: Dr. Chris Boleman  
Mr. Hurley Miller  
Dr. Susan Ballibana  
Mr. Ron Woolley  
Dr. Toby Lepley  
Ms. Angela Ehrler