



**West Texas Energy Consortium
2017 Annual Report**

West Texas Energy Consortium

End of Year Final Report

Report Period: December 1, 2016 – December 31, 2017

Privately Funded Projects and Events

While many may know that the West Texas Energy Consortium was established through oil and gas incentive funds via the Governor's Office and projects are paid for through these funds. You may not be aware that private funds and businesses have financially supported WTxEC projects, training and safety resources throughout the region. The Consortium has worked in the background to facilitate and complete these projects, trainings and provided resources for businesses and first responders.

Those funds centered on safety, school and first responder training or projects. **Safety** training events and projects ranging from digital signage, road signage and highway projects had a total of **\$221,500** invested in 2017. **School & education** projects ranging from safety fencing, STEM technology computer labs, and the TAME Trailblazer had a total investment of **\$50,365** in private WTxEC member funding. **First responder** projects that included dispatch and communication systems, gas monitors and safety equipment along with large equipment needs saw a total of **\$154,248** provided by industry investment. The **total investment** by private businesses for these community trainings and projects was a grand total of **\$426,113**. Thank you to our industry partners for those community contributions.

Family STEM Festivals and Career Exploration Events

Since the Consortium's inception in 2014 funding it has been a focus of our organization and its members to support youth in the region via education opportunities and career exploration. The Consortium has supported efforts throughout our 49 county region with funding, volunteering to work youth events and outreach & promotion of events we are not able to attend. Each year these events have grown. More businesses and employers attend to showcase their careers and what it is that they provide as far as service or goods. As word has gotten out to all the school districts and parents about these events more and more students have attended each subsequent event.

From December 2016 to November 2017, four regional youth career events were hosted. A total of 3,297 students have attended these events coming from 77 different independent school districts. A total of 151 employers, businesses and corporations participated in those events. One event was held in conjunction with a robotics competition and another event hosted mock interviews for attending junior and senior high school students in preparation of those college admission and job interviews. Those interviews were conducted by business leaders that volunteered for the day. Students were able to get the feel of what a job interview or college admissions interview would entail as they prepare for their future.

STEM Summer Camps

The Consortium partnered with University of Texas – Jackson School of Geoscience this year for the first time to offer a summer camp (STEMForce) for 9th grade students in West Texas. Those students were immersed in a host of science & engineering activities while at the Grand Canyon. Those students that attended this year will automatically be put forward to attend next

year's program for 10th graders and the Consortium is working with UT-JSG to raise funds for 20 new 9th graders to begin the STEMForce West Texas Program.

In collaboration with NASA, Texas Tech, Texas State University and a number of other institutions, Consortium staff served as an advisor on the Network of States Committee and hosted its first trainer's institute. The Consortium with the leadership of De'Lila Holder (Texas Tech) was able to secure 5 spots for West Texas teachers. Those teachers spent the first 3 weeks participating remotely from their home campus via webinars. The final week teachers traveled to Houston's Johnson Space Center and participated for a full week with scientists, astronauts and NASA educators; receiving free resources, binders and lesson plans for STEM education. Each teacher then returned to their home campus and trained a minimum of 25 teachers from their campus and surrounding rural ISDs (3rd – 8th grade science teachers). The network has also created a website for this institute. Visit the website at: <https://www.txstate-epdc.net/> This train the trainer institute was well received throughout the state and plans are already being made to recruit educators for the 2018 Institute. Through contributions from donors all travel, lodging, training materials and course work were provided to those in attendance. It is our hope that we will be able to raise the funds to provide this same training for 5 new educators in the West Texas region.

Educators STEM Conference

The E3 Summit: Building Bridges from Classroom to Career was hosted in Abilene, Texas on July 19, 2017 at the Abilene Convention Center. Educators from 21 different ISDs attended 10 STEM sessions that provided the latest and greatest in lesson plans, content materials and technology. We also provided a few sessions on literacy and the language arts as those are equally important in STEM. This event has been hosted in Abilene for the previous two years and has been well received with keynote speaker Josh Linkner who spoke on entrepreneurship and the spirit of building passion and energy in everyday learning. The summit has been so well received that several cities in the West Texas region and one in North Texas have asked to host the next summit. It is our hope that the Consortium will be able to coordinate and support this event in 2018.

The West Texas Manufacturers Industry Sector Partnership met with Educate Texas, Collaborative Economic and ISDs and colleges in the region for a soft skills workshop and continued work on the partnerships action plan. Their work has moved West Texas Manufacturers ahead in recruiting and maintaining viable employee candidates. This work caught the attention of economic officials and led to our group serving on a panel of speakers from Colorado, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Wyoming and Texas to share best practices and continue work with our support partners at a conference in late November. At that same conference our group was awarded \$1,000 check for continued support and endeavors. Our manufacturers will be hosting their next meeting February 7, 2018.

STEM Regional Center of Excellence & High school planning mobile app (TxGradU8)

The Regional COE was launched February 2017. We have continued to add tools, resources and ideas to the site. Teachers have sent in lesson plans that have been included on the site for anyone to access for their classrooms in the Texas. Upgrades have been made to the site including combining it with the existing West Texas Energy Consortium website for sustainability. The website has gained a lot of attention nationwide with companies and resource providers contacting the Consortium asking if their resources, lesson plans and content can be added to the website. We have had organizations and colleges/universities contact us about their career and college exploration tools which we are adding regularly to provide as much helpful information to students, parents and teachers in one location.

The TxGradU8 Career Pathway Mobile App was designed in accordance with the State of Texas high school graduation requirements for every student. Beginning the end of a student's 8th grade year when they build their schedule for 9th grade, their first year in high school, a student can explore the 5 Career and Technical Education endorsements, build their school schedule for the coming semester, keep track of classes as they are completed and count those credits towards graduation. This plan is done in real time tracking completed classes, classes in progress and classes to be taken before graduating. Upgrades have been made during the last quarter of 2017 that provides more demographic information for the Consortium and TEA to see where the concentration of students using the mobile app are located in Texas. These upgrades also allow us to focus efforts on endorsement areas that are of high interest to our students. It also allows parents to be involved and to track progress of their student's high school success leading up to graduation. School/career counselors are able to track their students and utilize this plan to meet their state reporting requirements. The upgrades and a promotion will begin the Spring of 2018 after testing and launching of the upgrades has been launched.

Dual Credit Scholarships

Each year the Consortium has been able to secure funds to provide dual credit scholarship funds to the Concho Valley, Permian Basin and West Central Texas regions. This year funds were provided to 294 high school students from Ector County, Midland, Pecos-Bartow-Toyah, Abilene, Sweetwater, Ranger, Cisco, Clyde, Baird, San Angelo and Grape Creek Independent School Districts. A total of five colleges (Midland, Odessa, Cisco, Ranger and TSTC colleges) enrolled those dual credit students in course work that gets them one step closer to college completion. In some cases students are able to graduate high school and graduate with a certificate or associates degree in their program of choice. The Consortium takes to heart the "grow your own" strategy in order to fill employment gaps or looking ahead to economic and business growth expectations. A lot of that rests on staying in contact with our industry leaders, learning what the next 5 to 10 years looks like for them and collaborating with the business and workforce board leadership to plan for that future.

Post-secondary Scholarships

Scholarships were awarded to 103 college students this year. The Consortium provided funds to students in areas of nursing and other healthcare programs, business, HVAC, computer systems, welding, applied engineering, machinist, diesel technology, automotive technology, aviation maintenance, CDL training, fire fighter's academy, petroleum technician, OSHA certification, electrical lineman, and industrial technology.

All of those students completed successfully and we have a number of students that have graduated and are now in the workforce doing what they love. While these scholarships have been a bonus for the region it has been hard to continue finding funds for both dual and post-secondary scholarships. This area may be one that is not a focus for the Consortium moving forward but we never-say-never. Should donations, endowments or financial support be provided; we will continue to grow our own based on industry needs of those high demand occupations. Moving forward any scholarship donations will be handled directly through the WTxEC office and reviewed by our scholarship committee.

Student Internships and Teacher Externships

The West Texas Energy Consortium hosted its first educator externship. In cooperation with a group of employers (Team Workforce) in Abilene and the region 14 education service center; eleven educators attended a week long externship that began with an orientation session for educators and employers. The week consisted of educators spending 3 hours to half a day with each participating employer learning about their service or product, industry practices, and all the careers/occupations offered within that employer's business. In some cases the educators were able to go out on jobsites and participate in the employer's daily activities.

Employers included the energy industry, construction trade, manufacturing, media/communications, automotive technology, and computer development, programming & networking. We started on a small scale to see how well it was received and to work directly with the externship partners and educators through the experience. We hosted an "exit interview" with all the educators to discover what worked and what we need to work on in improving the experience. We also received feedback from employers on the experience. With this information we can all work at building a better externship experience for 2018 and hopefully grow it to other regions.

Meanwhile in the Concho Valley region 14 students participated in a business internship with local businesses. The experience served as an information gathering time for the student who is looking to pursue a career in the profession of their choice. The internships allowed both student and employer to train and be trained. Through conversations and some digging we found that companies throughout the region offer internships within their organization that may not be advertised. Our focus in 2018 is to reach out to those employers and navigate them towards the internship posting site hosted online by the Texas Workforce Commission and promoting that site to high school and college students.

Success Stories

We have seen a lot of success in students and projects that we have been honored to be a part and in some cases coordinated/implemented this year. In case you missed any of these success stories that have been posted throughout the year, take a look at what your funding, volunteer hours and moral support has done in our communities:

Industry Sector Partnerships – In January the Consortium along with the Woolsey Group, Educate Texas, Collaborative Economics and the West Central Texas Workforce Board launched 2 industry sector partnerships. Manufacturing and healthcare were chosen as those are the most prominent and high demand areas of employment for the west central region. The manufacturing group has really taken off with meetings happening throughout the year. Manufacturers attended a soft skills workshop that was hosted in conjunction with the E3 Educators Summit this past July. This workshop further allowed the business leaders to prioritize what they want to focus on as a group. Our manufacturing group has been held up against several class A partnerships throughout the state as an example of a successful partnership. The manufacturer's group was awarded \$1,000 in funds to use moving forward for future endeavors. For more information on the industry partnerships visit, www.wtxec.org/info/industry-sector-partnership for current action plans and past meeting information.

The West Texas Energy Consortium serves on the steering committee for the Permian Road Safety Coalition (www.permianroadsafety.org) along with business and government organization leadership. The industry partnership focuses on road and transportation safety, business best practices and roundtable discussions about employee recruitment and retention. The past two years this group has hosted the Goal Zero Rally in Midland to promote safe driving habits for students, parents, and businesses in the region. These efforts were recognized by the American Marketing Association's Houston Chapter earlier this year where the coalition received the Crystal award along with a check that was invested into road and safety projects in the Permian Basin. This group continues to add members and we are looking forward to an equally successful 2018 for projects and events.

Texas Energy Day in Austin on March 22nd saw the launch of #TalkTexasOil. The Consortium along with a group of energy professionals ranging from drillers, pipeline, landmen and safety officials have begun an online presence called #TalkTexasOil. From each of our on perspectives and areas of expertise we have been doing live podcasts beginning with the Presidential Inauguration on January 20th. These podcasts have focused on energy policy and what that means for the workforce, our region and what that potential could mean for our K-12 and college students looking at future careers. The overall concept has grown to an online advocacy for education and energy awareness. The Consortium has enjoyed a working relationship with TXOGA officials whereby we have been able to promote events and provide resources. TXOGA has included the Consortium in press releases and op-eds.

Take a look at some of the student success stories supported through scholarship fund efforts:

Ashley B: completed her AAS degree during the summer. She was so excited to have located her own internship site. She completed her internship in May. She found that “managing time to commit to both education and the family is definitely a struggle”. Her personal story of extraordinary drive, persistence, and commitment stand as example of the success of the STEM Pipeline Scholarship opportunity available to students at Howard College. She stated that she has never had anyone help her like this before and she is so thankful to the Consortium, the workforce board and the college.

Sarah L: is a veteran who served in the military from 2009 to 2014. She completed her AAS in Business – Management in December 2017. Her ultimate goal is to acquire a position within a business firm working in the HR Department. She plans to transfer to Angelo State University and complete her Bachelor in Business Administration while she is working full time.

Crystal E: completed her AAS Nursing – Degree through the scholarship program and transitioned to the Registered Nursing program for her Bachelor of Science – Nursing. Embarking on a journey, she began college, which at the time seemed ‘daunting, nebulous, and even unfathomable’ in her words. With the encouragement of family, school mentors, esteemed faculty, and friends, she was able to obtain her goals. “I was able to transform from an eager student, into a focused, confident, determined, and successful RN”. Crystal will graduated in July 2017 and started working as a traveling RN for Critical Health Care.

Joe Z: completed his AAS Nursing – Degree through the scholarship program and transition to the Registered Nursing program for his Bachelor of Science – Nursing. Joe made his way into college with a strong will to stay the course. He attributes his success to the resources provided at Howard College. The Consortium's STEM Pipeline Scholarship allowed for him to focus on his studies during his last semester. Joe is currently working for Baptist Retirement

Community. He has been offered positions at both Shannon Medical Center and San Angelo Community Medical Center. Joe plans to obtain his bachelor degree in nursing at UT – Arlington. Joe stated, “The STEM grant helped me to continue with the RN program at Howard College. At the time, I was not able to provide the funding needed to stay in school. I would not have been able to finish my spring semester if it was not for this funding. To say I have experienced hardship at the beginning of my spring semester is an understatement. But at the same time, those hardships have been the most important factors shaping me into the person I am today. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity for applying and receiving the STEM scholarship”.

Opal Mobbs, Career Preparation Instructor from Abilene High School attended both the summer externship and summit. She provided in person feedback to the West Central Texas Workforce Boards regular board meeting in August and this written feedback – *“I just wanted to say thank you for all you have done from the externship to the E3 Summit. I have learned a lot and my head has so many things swirling around and I hope some of the things I have been thinking about can materialize. I so hope you will be able to find someone to sponsor the signs for my room. That is going to be my theme this year. I hope we can meet together again with the business folks and see what we can do to move AISD and the surrounding school districts to embrace the E3 Spirit! Thank you again for heading this up, I loved visiting with the various exhibitors today and the classes I attended were very informative.”*

In conjunction with Careers in Texas Industries week, the Consortium was able to provide funds for the three workforce board areas to help with Careers in Texas. West Central’s workforce board hosted Careers in Action, a video contest for students in grades 6 – 12 focused on increasing awareness and knowledge of careers. Student teams supported by a teacher sponsor produced 2 – 3 minute videos that highlighted one or more of the 16 Achieve Texas Career Clusters, associated occupations and the educational pathway. Student videos that included interviews and/or engagement with employers received additional points.

A total of 10 schools participated in this first year event from 7 different counties and 10 of the 16 career clusters were represented in videos. A panel of volunteer judges representing business, schools, local universities and local media selected winners in each category. A red carpet “premiere” was held on Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at the Historic Paramount Theater in downtown Abilene to announce contest winners. A 45-minute video montage highlighted winners in each category, which were divided into middle school and high school divisions, then further divided based on student enrollment. A total of \$17,300 was awarded to teachers to purchase resources for their classrooms. Purchases included robotics supplies, drone kits, educational resources, a 3-D printer and Chromebooks. Feedback was solicited from participating schools and one teacher wrote: “Students benefitted from participating in this contest in so many ways. It encouraged them to do research, and see real life results of hard work. It helped them understand deadlines. They were exposed to many career paths. The project fostered team work and the need for collaboration. It focused them on project planning, project implementation and overall project quality. They learned to see details and the importance of small things. It was a great learning experience.”

Conclusion

It has been a full year and it could not have been done without all of our partners, members, volunteers and board member support. All of these projects have been made possible through private funds, corporate grant awards and grant funds through the State of Texas. We look forward to continued success in the near future and hope to keep adding value to this region.

