Growing Communities through Workforce Training

- High quality customer service is an essential counterpart to professional business practice and to the continued success of destination tourism and related businesses in Texas communities.
- Nearly a third of consumers believe that, in this current economy, businesses ‘pay less attention to providing good customer service’ (32% from 1,000 in survey; American Express Global Customer Service Barometer report, 2012).
- Public and private sector business practitioners require continued professional development support through business training programs that address the expectations of quality customer service to destination visitors.

Extension’s Response

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension conducts the Texas Friendly Hospitality Program, providing customer service training for business practitioners as well as instructor training for business managers and AgriLife Extension Agent leaders.
- Program evaluation of customer service workshops in 2012 conducted by Texas Friendly program manager indicated registrant willingness to adopt the program (98%), confidence to change commitment level creating positive customer service experiences (97%), and anticipation of an economic benefit as a direct result from Texas Friendly training (77%).
- From 2011 through 2013, Texas Friendly customer service training has produced over 125,000 educational contact hours and provided by Texas Friendly customer service instructors.

Economic Impact

- In 2012, $65 billion came from total direct travel earnings and travel spending that supported 568,000 jobs in Texas, generating nearly $4.4 billion in local and state taxes.
Domestic visitation to Texas increased 6% over 2011 with an estimated 220 million domestic travelers having visited Texas destinations in 2012. (Texas Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism report, July 2013)

To meet the demands of increased state tourism, Texas Friendly Hospitality Program will continue to provide quality professional development customer service training programs that address the needs of destination visitors.