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# Texas Yes!

Texas Department of Agriculture

June 2006

## SPECIAL FOCUS: BRANDING YOUR COMMUNITY

From Susan Combs,  
Commissioner

Whether cattle or commerce, a brand is a mark of distinction. **But more than a name or logo, a brand is a promise of an experience.** Like branding giants Coca-Cola, Disney and Starbucks, tiny towns across Texas are forging strong emotional bonds with their customers – citizens, tourists and businesses alike – by creating and delivering a consistent branded experience. Learn the secrets to their success in this issue, with advice from hometown heroes and branding experts on capturing the promise of your community.

### CASE STUDY: Branding Cure for Growing Pains in McKinney

*A getaway destination... just minutes from the city... offering casual elegance and small town friendliness... with upscale shops, boutiques and galleries... and an historic district with romantic B and Bs... where outdoor recreation and nature abound.*

**Sounds ideal!** But in 2004, the only thing growing faster than the population of McKinney, Texas, was the number of logos representing this Collin County seat in the prairies and lakes region just minutes from Dallas.

With three city logos and a city seal, plus unrelated logos for every city-related entity from the economic development corporation to the chamber, McKinney's identity

was confusing to say the least. But the multiple graphic identities were a telling symptom of a more critical issue: inconsistent messaging and lost opportunities to leverage precious marketing dollars.

Having doubled in size from 2000 to 2004, this "fastest growing city in America" was at a crossroads in determining its identity. The choice: Preserve the past or embrace the future. Through an inclusive and detailed planning process aided by professional market research, the solution was determined to be both – preserve the past and embrace the future with one vision, one voice.

Focus group research revealed residents viewed the McKinney experience unique from neighboring communities with its historic roots, natural setting, quality of life and dynamic new growth. The new logo and positioning statement "McKinney, Texas: Unique by Nature" represent those strengths.

Launched in a multi-media campaign blitz, the new brand is part of an even more important umbrella marketing strategy under which the marketing plans, messaging and logos of each city entity now work together to optimize efforts to grow tourism and business.

What made McKinney's re-branding efforts successful? According to CoCo Good, director of communications and marketing for the City of McKinney, the seven secrets were:

1. A commitment by city leaders to common goals and a long-term vision;
2. A deliberately inclusive and detailed planning process;
3. Professional marketing research, and the willingness to accept the findings;
4. A solid, creative design process and flawless execution;
5. The willingness of city-related groups to partner together, adopting one consistent branding strategy and logo, building individual marketing plans in support of the overall city master plan;
6. Immediate and visible use of the brand; and
7. The efforts of the most important brand ambassadors – city employees and citizens!

For more on McKinney's branding and marketing success, see the October 2005 issue of *Texas Town & City* published by the Texas Municipal League ([www.tml.org](http://www.tml.org)) or visit [www.McKinneyTexas.org](http://www.McKinneyTexas.org) and [www.McKinneyTx.org](http://www.McKinneyTx.org).

### TEN EASY STEPS

"Branding is not for sissies," according to tagline guru Eric Swartz. "A slogan is a valuable ambassador. When conceived correctly, it can reflect a city's style and personality, leverage its assets and communicate a compelling message. Think of it as urban renewal without having to pass a bond measure."

Swartz offers straight-talking, sharp-shooting advice with a touch of humor in his article "Jumping on the Brandwagon: How to Give Your City a Motto Makeover in 10 Easy Steps," also published as a Best Practices paper by the American Marketing Association in March, 2006.

For Swartz's expert branding advice go to [www.taglineguru.com](http://www.taglineguru.com) (click on Articles).



Fort Stockton Big Bend Open Road Race

### TOP TEXAS BRANDS

**Don't Mess with Texas:** The tough-talking branding was created for the Texas Department of Transportation by advertising agency GSD&M as part of a statewide multi-media anti-litter campaign inaugurated in 1986 by blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan. Now more than trash talk – it's synonymous nationwide with Texas pride. [www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)

**It's Like a Whole Other Country:** Hot, flat, dry and dusty – this perception of Texas was a serious image problem addressed by the Texas Department of Economic Development and Tourism and GSD&M with the branding that changed attitudes and grew tourism by turning a weakness – the state's size – into a positive. [www.traveltex.com](http://www.traveltex.com)

### TOP TEXAS YES! BRANDS

Travel with us down the super-highway and winding rural roads to see how your neighbors are branding their community experience:

#### Clifton

Norwegian Capital of Texas  
[www.cliftontexas.org](http://www.cliftontexas.org)

#### Eagle Lake

Goose Hunting Capital of the World  
[www.visitaglelake.com](http://www.visitaglelake.com)

#### Fort Davis

Where the Stars Come Out to Play  
[www.fortdavis.com](http://www.fortdavis.com)

#### Fort Stockton

The Friendliest Town in Texas  
[www.ci.fort-stockton.tx.us](http://www.ci.fort-stockton.tx.us)

#### Junction/Kimble County

Land of the Living Waters  
[www.junctiontexas.net](http://www.junctiontexas.net)

#### Madisonville

Mushroom Capital of Texas  
[www.texasmushroomfestival.com](http://www.texasmushroomfestival.com)

#### McCamey

Wind Energy Capital of Texas  
[www.mccameychamber.com](http://www.mccameychamber.com)

#### Pecos

Home of the World's First Rodeo  
[www.pecostx.com](http://www.pecostx.com)

#### Snyder

Home of the White Buffalo  
[www.snyderchamber.org](http://www.snyderchamber.org)

#### Recommended Reading:

"City Branding Usage Guidelines" by the City of Georgetown, [www.georgetown.org](http://www.georgetown.org); click on "News, Events and Elections" for this article listed under Public Information/Media.

### Hard Work Recognized

Here's a Texas Yes! "shout-out" to the 25 rural communities honored at the Texas Yes! Hardworking Rural Community awards ceremony in Austin on April 4, 2006. Shining Star awards were presented to Aspermont, Athens, Center, Clifton and Perryton. Other finalists included Beeville, Bellville, Commerce, Gladewater, Groesbeck, Munday, Quitaque, Round Top, Terlingua/Study Butte/Lajitas, and Tye. Fort Stockton was the first recipient of the Susan Combs Trailblazer Hall of Fame Award for scoring at the top the past three years. Honorable Mention Awards of Merit went to El Campo,

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## RALLYING AROUND RURAL TEXAS!

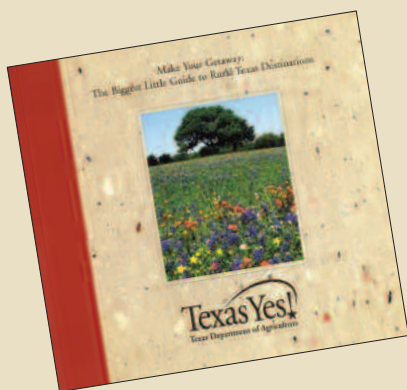


Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs helps salute the 2006 Texas Yes! Hardworking Communities at a special ceremony April 4.

### Hardworking (cont.)

Hebbronville, Henrietta, Ladonia, Quitman, Pittsburg, Rockdale, Spearman and Whitewright. Congratulations to all for your tireless efforts to keep rural Texas growing! Be on the lookout for the next call for applications later this year at [www.texasyes.org](http://www.texasyes.org).

## The Biggest Little Guide: Getaway Destinations



From Llano, the “Land of Legend and Lore,” to Jasper, the “Jewel of the Forest,” and on to Hutto, “Hippo Capital of Texas,” rural Texas offers a wagonload of can’t-be-missed experiences. To support rural tourism efforts, Texas Yes! asked members to submit entries for “Make Your Getaway: The Biggest Little Guide to Rural Texas Destinations.” Now available in print by calling (866) 4TEX-YES or online at [www.texasyes.org](http://www.texasyes.org), it’s not too late to add your community to the online version. Just send an e-mail to [texasyes@agr.state.tx.us](mailto:texasyes@agr.state.tx.us).

### Can you guess which communities these represent?

1. Meat Goat Capital of America
2. Wiener Dog Capital of Texas
3. Texana Outback
4. The North Star of Texas
5. Where the Sun Spends the Winter

Answers: 1. Mills County; 2. Budak; 3. Jackson County; 4. Grubham; 5. Zapata

## Meet Rhonda Henderson!



Texas native Rhonda Henderson has been tapped by the Texas Department of Agriculture to become the new state marketing coordinator for Texas Yes! Henderson is no stranger to the tourism industry and brings with her more than four years of experience with the Texas Department of Economic Development and the Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism. She also has extensive experience working closely with other tourism agencies and communities across Texas. Henderson has been with TDA for more than three years, and her most recent post was at the helm of the agency’s nationally recognized children’s nutrition outreach campaign.

She looks forward to working with rural communities across Texas and can be reached at (866) 4TEX-YES or [rhonda.henderson@agr.state.tx.us](mailto:rhonda.henderson@agr.state.tx.us).

**Make Your Mark:** Under Texas law dating back to the days of the Republic and still in force today, cattle brands must be registered at the county clerk’s office in the county where the cattle are located. Among the oldest brands in continuous use is the Running W of King Ranch, originated in 1869. Generally brands are read from left to right, top to bottom or outside to inside. The ideal brand (in cattle or commerce) is simple in design and easily recognized, but is not easily confused with a neighbor’s. Try your hand at “callin” or reading these simple brand marks:



Answers: 1. Bar R; 2. Lazy R; 3. Crazy R; 4. Rocking R; 5. Diamond R

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Whether you’re a seasoned pro or a spring lamb, the latest in the series of Texas Yes! rural tourism workshops has all the ingredients to help make your event one to remember. The smorgasbord of topics includes event planning, budgeting, sponsorships, minimizing risk, measuring success and investing returns.

### Giddings

July 31 - Aug. 1

### Athens

Aug. 2 - Aug. 3

### Marathon

Aug. 23 - Aug. 24

Take advantage of all the Texas Yes! networking opportunities while learning how to spice up tourism in your rural community. For more details on the Bootstrap Marketing Workshop Series III, go to [www.texasyes.org](http://www.texasyes.org).



“A city cannot be something it is not, but with careful planning, the right research, and an innovative and creative approach – an expression of who a city is should shine in its brand.”

– CoCo Good, director of communications and marketing, City of McKinney

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