Economic Development/Workforce Training

Relevance
- 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.

Program Description:
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 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.

Results
- Program evaluation of customer service workshops in 2012 conducted by the 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 direct educational contact hours and provided by Texas Friendly customer service instructors.

Economic Impact
- Destination tourism generated an estimated $65 billion in 2012, accounting...
for total direct travel earnings and travel spending and supported 568,000 jobs in Texas.
- 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)