

FISCAL YEAR 2009 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE -- REP. Michael Burgess (TX-26)

Must be completed and submitted NO LATER than COB March 7, 2008

Please submit completed questionnaire to josh.martin@mail.house.gov

PLEASE NOTE: ALL REQUESTS MUST INCLUDE A FORMAL LETTER OF REQUEST ON OFFICIAL LETTERHEAD EXPLAINING THE PROJECT. THIS QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD ACCOMPANY, NOT REPLACE, A FORMAL LETTER OF REQUEST AND ANY OTHER QUESTIONNAIRE

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

1. Please provide a formal name for this project:

North Central Texas College Agriculture Center

2. Please describe the project and its purpose:

North Central Texas College (NCTC) established in 1924, is the oldest continuously operating public supported community college in Texas. NCTC is a comprehensive public community college with an open-door admissions policy, covering a three-county service area including Cooke, Montague, and Denton Counties. The Cooke County Campus is located in Gainesville, south of the Texas/Oklahoma border enrolling over 1,900 students. The Corinth Campus is located in Denton County serving over 4,800 students, and the Bowie Campus is located in rural Montague County serving over 350 students.

Through the college's technical and workforce development programs the college provides quality workforce training programs to assist area business and industry in this rural area. North Central Texas College provides students with multi-entry and multi-exit career pathways to help fuel the regional economic competitiveness. NCTC must serve the full spectrum of individuals seeking training — those with few skills and no experience in the workplace, those currently employed in minimum wage jobs and those in need of upgrade training to advance in their careers as well as those wishing to transfer to a university for an advanced degree. NCTC has a long history of providing quality workforce training for the agriculture industry. NCTC offers courses in Farm and Ranch Management, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Equine Sciences. As the agriculture industry has moved to a more technological advanced industry, NCTC has not been able to keep pace with their training labs and equipment. Currently, the agriculture programs do not have a centralized facility to offer these programs.

NCTC has a strong partnership with area school districts Future Farmers of America organizations and the 4-H and Youth programs. Over the years, NCTC has hosted thousands of youth on campus for various animal judging contests, leadership contests and hay judging contest to encourage leadership development among these youth. In addition, NCTC is supportive of the area youth fairs and youth programming. Over the past ten years, over 7,000 youth participated in the Cooke County Youth Fair.

NCTC is requesting funding to assist in the construction of an Agriculture Center that would house all of the college's agricultural programs to provide the latest in technology and lab equipment to prepare students to successfully compete in a global market. In addition, this facility will include an arena and exhibit area that will be used for college-level programs as well as various youth development programs including the county fair, various FFA/4-H judging contest.

3. Please outline the project plan, including the finance plan:

NCTC's project plan includes the construction of the Agriculture Center to modernize and centralize all of their current agriculture offerings as well as expand the current programs and services to better meet the needs of their service area. The facilities will also allow NCTC to expand their outreach to the community by hosting various agriculture youth development programming including hosting the county fair, area/region/state FFA judging contests, conducting summer camps for youth, inviting area school districts to participate in a Farm City Week to learn more about the importance of the agriculture industry. In addition, the NCTC agriculture program will conduct various adult education workshops for the ag industry to keep them current on issues and upgrade their job skills.

NCTC plans to construct a 12,500 sq. ft. classroom/lab facility to house the agriculture, farm & ranch, horticulture, and equine sciences programs. In addition, a 10,500 sq. ft. arena and a 3,600 sq. ft. exhibit area will be constructed as a learning lab for college students as well as be utilized for various youth shows and judging contest. The preliminary cost estimate for this facility is \$2,345,000.

The cost of this facility will be covered by grant funds, private contributions from individuals and industry partners, and college funds. The maintenance and operation of this facility will be assumed by the college.

II. BENEFIT TO THE 26th DISTRICT AND/OR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1. Please explain how this project will improve life, the economy or the general welfare of the 26th District and/or the country at-large. Please be specific (i.e. outline number of jobs created, savings to economy or taxpayers, improve national security):

Agriculture is the world's most crucial industry. Farming and ranching have changed radically in recent years. New methods, new varieties, new breeds, new equipment and a new global economy all are having far-reaching effects on how the farmer and rancher must operate in order to compete in today's high-tech, high-risk marketplace. The chances for success are very poor for the farmer/rancher who hasn't prepared himself or herself through education, to meet the challenges.

Equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to compete in today's real-world agricultural market place is the primary goal at North Central Texas College. NCTC offers a two-year Associate Degree program to prepare a student for further study at a senior college and a two-year degree or a one-year certificate program to prepare a student for a more immediate entry into the job market. In addition, short-term courses are offered to assist individuals already working in the industry to update their knowledge and skills.

The new Agriculture Center will allow the college to prepare students to compete in today's high-tech, high-risk agriculture marketplace. Students will enter careers with banks, breed associations, DVM, equipment companies, Farm Bureau, farmers, ranchers, dairymen, Federal Land Bank, feed industry, FMHA, horticulture/landscaping, livestock publications, equine industry, livestock supply, extension service, real estate, school administration, teachers, Texas Department of Agriculture and United State Department of Agriculture.

NCTC service area includes three counties including two very rural counties – Cooke and Montague and the more urban Denton County; however, NCTC tax revenue is only generated from Cooke County. In 2007-08, NCTC's tax income accounted for only 6% of their total revenue. Additionally, state appropriations for academic and technical courses for 07-08 accounted for only 26.6% of the total revenue budget. NCTC is depended on local funds from tuition and fee for the majority of their revenue stream, thus placing additional financial burden on the rural student. In order to pay for the construction of the Agriculture Center, NCTC is requesting these grant funds to lesson the burden on the students as well as the local tax payers.

2. Please explain why this project should be considered a priority:

In addition, to the impact the Agriculture Center will have on the college's ability to provide high quality, high-tech agriculture education to provide a skilled workforce, this center will be critical for the development of area youth. Cooke County currently serves as a way point for drug trafficking organizations located in Mexico, California, and Chicago. Because of the prevalence of drugs and gangs in the area, it is critical to provide alternatives for our area youth.

The Gainesville Police Department stated gangs have significantly increased their recruitment of Gainesville juveniles in the past five years. Children as young as ten years old are showing signs of gang affiliation. Since 2005, the number of cases of gang affiliation filed with the local Municipal Court have tripled. These teens need to be shown alternatives to gang life and given tools to succeed in working and social environments.

Participation in area FFA chapters and 4-H programs provides this alternative. The availability of this type of facility will allow increased program offerings and will allow more youth to participate in these youth development programs.

III. REQUEST

1. Amount of money you are requesting:

NCTC is requesting \$345,000 in support of the construction of the Agriculture Center

2. Agency from which you are requesting funds:

United State Department of Agriculture (USDA)

3. Account from which you are requesting funds:

Rural Development

IV. FUNDING HISTORY

1. What is the total project cost and can you provide a federal-state/local-other funding breakdown?

The estimated total cost of this project is \$2,345,000. NCTC plans to use a combination of private and local funds for the remaining \$2 million needed to complete this project.

2. Has the project ever received federal funds before? If so, please elaborate.

NCTC receives federal funds for college work study and financial aid; however, this project has not received any federal funds.

3. Has the project received state, local or private funds before? If so, please elaborate.

The NCTC Agriculture program has received state appropriations for contact hour generation for agriculture courses. In addition, private donors have financed the cost of the construction of a greenhouse for the Horticulture program and provided funds for agriculture scholarships.

4. Can you demonstrate a commitment for future funds from state, local, or private sectors? If so, please elaborate to the extent possible.

Over the past 10 years, private donors have supported the NCTC agriculture programs in a variety of ways including hosting an Ad Roundup Auction that generates over \$25,000 annually to support the ag programs and ag scholarships. These funds will assist with the sustainability of this project. In addition, NCTC will assume the plant operations and maintenance cost of this facility.

5. How do you intend to spend federal funds for this project (operating, construction, studies, equipment purchase, salaries, other)?

The funds requested will be used for the construction of the Agriculture Center.

6. Does the project request stem from a currently-funded federal program (i.e., an already existing congressional authorization)? If so, please explain and be as specific as possible.

No

V. PROJECT HISTORY

1. Please briefly explain the level of support for the project in the local and any other community (if letters of support exist, please attach to this form).

Cooke County has a strong agricultural base and a long history of supporting education and youth development. NCTC Agriculture program has a strong reputation in the community and has many supporter of the program. The various Ag Advisory Committee have all identified a centralized facility for the program as the number one priority for enhancing their programs and meeting the needs of the ag industry.

After a tornado in 2005, that destroyed the Cooke County Fair Grounds, the community approached the college about partnering to build a comprehensive Agricultural Center that would not only house the college educational programs but could be used for the various FFA & 4-H programs and services. Literally, thousands of youth participate in these programs. Local ag supporters have agreed to assist with the finish out of the arena by providing the materials and labor to construct the show pens and the stadium seating.

2. Has the project encountered any objections within the local or other interested communities? If so, please describe (if letters or official records exist noting objections to the project, please attach to this form).

No

3. Please briefly explain the current stage and expected timeline of the project in a great a detail as possible.

This project is in its initial stage of development – securing funding for the project. NCTC personnel and community leaders are in the process of seeking funding through various sources including grant development, private contributions, and fundraising activities. In addition, the plans for the facilities are being developed and finalized.

Once the funding has been secured, the project will be submitted for bids and after the bidding process construction will begin. The estimated timeline for the completion of this facility is summer 2009.

VI. CONTACTS

1. Who is the primary point of contact for the request?

Debbie Sharp

2. Contact information (telephone and e-mail):

Telephone: (940) 668-4213

Email: dsharp@nctc.edu

3. Mailing address of entity that would receive the funding?

North Central Texas College

1525 W. California St.

Gainesville, Texas 76240

VII. TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS – Not Applicable

1. How much of this request can be spent in fiscal year 2009?

2. If this is a highway, transit, rail, or aviation request, did you check eligibility with the state DOT, FTA, FRA, or FAA?

2a. If yes, did the agency indicate the project is eligible under the account requested?

3. If this is an FHWA request, is the project considered by the state and/or regional transportation officials as critical to their needs?

4. If a highway request, is the project on the state's transportation improvement plan?

PRIORITY PROJECT REQUEST CRITERIA

CERTIFICATION:

I, Eddie Hadlock, ATTEST THAT THIS PROJECT REQUEST MADE ON BEHALF OF

North Central Texas College MEETS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

1. All appropriations requests must be a priority for the 26th District and/or the country-at large as defined as enhancing life, liberty, or the general welfare.
2. All requests must be a proper and wise use of federal taxpayer dollars and must be justified as such. Projects that include a commitment to match federal funds will receive priority consideration.
3. All requests will be immediately posted on the website and supporting documentation made available to press outlets and interested individuals.
4. None of the funding requested will be used for a building, program, or project that has been named for Congressman Michael C. Burgess, M.D. No request will be made that Congressman Burgess or his spouse has any financial interest.
5. All requests shall be made in accordance with House of Representatives rules, and within Appropriations Committee deadlines. No funding request will be submitted after the deadline established by the Committee

Name of person certifying: Dr. Eddie Hadlock

Title of person certifying: President

Project name as it will appear in the bill: North Central Texas College Agriculture Center

Legal name of entity making request: North Central Texas College

Address: 1525 W. California St. Gainesville, Texas 76240

Eddie C. Hadlock

March 7, 2008

Signature

Date

