

#26

**COMPLETE**

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Page 2: Contact Information

**Q1**

Name of your county

Montgomery

**Q2**

Enter name of CHC chair who managed 2021 work. If you have "co-chairs," provide the name of the one chair who can be the one point of contact for our agency.

Name of CHC chair who managed 2021 work

**Larry L Foerster**

Chair's physical address

**414 West Phillips Street Suite 100**

Chair's cell phone number

**936-537-9070**

Other phone number for chair

**936-756-3338**

Email address for chair

**foerster@dfcllp.com****Q3****Respondent skipped this question**

Info for individual filling out this report IF OTHER THAN CHAIR, so we can make further inquiries about report.

Page 3: Organizational Basics

**Q4**Number of CHC appointees **30**

Provide the total number of CHC appointees serving in 2021. Please enter numbers only for your answer; webpage will not advance if you enter punctuation, symbols, or text.

**Q5** Number of volunteer hours **2450**

Volunteer hours should reflect time contributed by appointees and other volunteers who may contribute to CHC projects/programs. Include time spent at meetings, events, and travel to/from meetings and events, etc. Enter volunteer hours that were contributed in 2021. If you do not track hours, enter an approximate number. Enter the number "0" if your CHC is inactive.

**Q6** CHC full commission meetings in 2021 **6**  
CHC committee meetings in 2021 **4**

Provide the number of CHC meetings. Enter the number "0" in both boxes, if your CHC did not meet. Both items below must be answered using numbers only; do not use punctuation, symbols or text.

**Q7**

If needed, provide comments / clarifications about hours, appointee count, or meetings. Skip if no comment.

Our Commissioners Court appointed an additional member to our Commission. Our website, marker and cemetery committees continued their projects, with one new county historical marker to the Conroe Service League dedicated on October 14. We partnered with the Friend of the Flag Foundation and the Montgomery County Veterans Memorial Commission on a Texas Legacy Flags Fest which promoted the Texas Revolution flags at the Lone Star Monument and Historical Flag Park in Conroe. The Fest theme was "Texas Heroes--Past and Present," honoring First Responders and Military that have served our community and our nation during the COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to support the preservation of historic structures in the county with grant funding and supervision of projects. One project in particular was the restoration of the foundation of the 1899 Thomas Chapel Church building in Willis, the oldest African American church in our county. Three of our Commission members supervised the restoration.

Page 4: Organizational Basics (continued)

**Q8** **100% of full commission meetings made quorum**

Quorum is met when a majority of all appointees are present at a CHC meeting. Check the box next to the percentage that best reflects how often a QUORUM was present for your full commission meetings in 2021. Clicking a circle selects the circle; clicking again will deselect the circle.

**Q9** **76-99% of our CHC appointees have taken Open Meetings training**

Open Meetings Act training is offered by the Texas Attorney General's office on their website. All appointees should take this training so that your CHC adheres to applicable laws and policies concerning appointed roles. Check the percentage that best reflects the number of CHC appointees who have completed Open Meetings training.

Page 5: Organizational Basics (continued)

**Q10**

Check each way your CHC officially reported 2021 activities to your county officials.

- Met with the county judge,
  - Met with county commissioners,
  - Submitted a CHC budget,
  - Provided suggested CHC appointments,
  - Plan to present summary of 2021 accomplishments to commissioners court in early 2022
- 

**Q11**

Check the elected officials that your CHC regularly invited to events and activities in 2021.

- County judge,
  - County commissioners,
  - Mayor/s of cities in your county,
  - City council members from cities within your county,
  - State legislators,
  - U.S. legislators
- 

Page 6: Financial Resources

**Q12**

Which serves as the repository for CHC money? Check each answer that applies to your CHC.

- County treasury
-

**Q13**

Enter the amount of money provided directly to your CHC next to each line item. Use numbers for the dollar amount, rounding amount up to the nearest dollar. Please do not use symbols or text; commas and decimals are considered to be symbols. Each box requires an amount; enter the number "0" if no monies are associated with the line item.

Balance carried over from 2020: **15000**  
 Annual county allocation for 2021 (not including money for museums): **30000**  
 County money allotted for museums in 2021 (passing through CHC): **0**  
 Any other money issued by county during 2021 (one-time amount for a special project, etc.): **0**  
 CHC fundraising proceeds (events, book sales, etc.) during 2021: **300**  
 Grant money provided to CHC in 2021: **0**  
 Donations made to CHC from partners / nonprofits in 2021: **900**  
 "Membership" dues (though not recommended, some CHCs do request dues): **0**  
 Any other money amounts for 2021 not already included above; DO NOT include CHC appointee out-of-pocket expenses.

**Q14**

Provide any clarifications about above amounts; skip if you have no comments.

We receive \$30,000 each year from our County Commissioners Court for grants to 501c3 nonprofit organizations for preservation reimbursements, maintenance of our webpage, and other related expenses. In addition, we receive cash donations from local businesses for our annual History Road Rally and funds from the sale of the "Montgomery County, Texas Historical Timeline."

Page 7: Financial Resources (continued)

**Q15**

Check the alternative funding methods that apply to your CHC in 2021.

**Secured private grant money to fund or partially fund a CHC project**

,

Provide additional information for the above checked boxes.:

A local automobile dealership sponsors our History Road Rally with a \$500 stipend. We receive donations from individuals and from the Montgomery County Genealogical and Historical Society.

**Q16**

In-kind donations are goods and/or services provided to your organization at no charge. Check any in-kind donations provided by your COUNTY in 2021.

**Space for archive or records storage,**

**Assistance from county staff--posting meetings, financial reports, legal consultations, etc.**

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**Administrative supplies or services--postage, paper, ink, copier, etc.**

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**Meeting and/or office space for CHC**

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Page 8: Organizational Planning

**Q17**

Work plans define project tasks, responsible participants, and deadlines. Check the box by the statement that best reflects the state of CHC planning documents.

**CHC has a work plan but it is simply a list of work that needs to be accomplished**

**Q18**

Check the boxes below that identify areas where concerted efforts were made to improve work in 2021 relative to previous years of service. Skip if none apply to your CHC.

**Bylaws,**

**Meeting attendance,**

**Preservation education for appointees,**

**Partnerships,**

**Community outreach to young people,**

**Online presence of CHC and/or county history,**

**Relationship with county commissioners court,**

**Initiated a new CHC project / event,**

**CHC planning,**

If you'd like, provide brief comments about work related to boxes checked above.:

As we have returned to in-person meetings, we have encouraged our members to attend in person. The Conroe Chamber of Commerce gives us meeting space. We have worked with the City of Conroe on its new Main Street Program initiative. Our webmaster continues to encourage articles on the history of Montgomery County and has added a link where he can add historic photos provided by local citizens. He has also added a link to the PDF copy of the Texas Flag Park Activity Book, a fun educational tool that teaches Texas Revolution history to 4th graders and other students. We have resumed regular meetings of our Youth Advisory Board students, which included a tour of the County Museum and a historic tombstones cleaning project. We are actively funding and promoting the Texas Flag Park Activity Book.

Page 9: CHC Appointee Education

**Q19**

Enter the number of CHC appointees who attended each training type or training from the listed organization. Please use numbers only; do not use text or symbols.

CHC Orientation video (THC website)	<b>4</b>
THC's 2021 Real Places Conference	<b>3</b>
THC marker workshop or webinar	<b>2</b>
THC cemetery workshop or webinar	<b>3</b>
THC museum workshop or webinar	<b>1</b>
THC Archeology Steward training	<b>0</b>
Friends of the THC grant writing workshop	<b>0</b>
Texas Heritage Trails regional nonprofit	<b>0</b>
Preservation Texas	<b>1</b>
Texas Association of Museums annual meeting	<b>0</b>
Texas Archeological Society	<b>0</b>
Any other history-related opportunity (not hosted by your CHC)	<b>1</b>

**Q20**

Check the box if your CHC provided or accessed the listed educational opportunity for appointees in 2021.

**Provided educational presentations for your CHC appointees**

,

**Used the THC website information to educate appointees**

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**Made use of the 2020 Real Places organizational challenges material (from conference or THC website)**

,

Provide additional information about educational topics covered in events associated with the boxes you checked above. Note if other CHCs attended your educational events.:

We have had a CLG consultant to our meeting to learn more about the advantages for a Certified Local Government designation. We also arranged for him to give a presentation to the Conroe City Council with the expectation that Conroe will work toward that certification. We promote the THC website for not only our members, but for others in our county who may have a variety of historic preservation projects and need guidance on how to proceed. We encourage both our Commission members and others to avail themselves of the free THC webinars. A number of us who attended the online Real Places Conferences shared the information with our Commission members by email and at our meetings.

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Page 10: 2021 Scope of Work Certification

**Q21**

Please acknowledge accuracy of reporting answers.

**I certify that, when specified by questions and information requests below, my answers will reflect CHC work performed in the 2021 year of service.**

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Page 11: CHC Stewardship and Survey

**Q22**

Check the work items in which your CHC was actively involved during 2021.

**Maintain an inventory of subject MARKERS in your county**

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**Maintain an inventory of CEMETERIES in your county,**

**Visit sites to monitor the physical condition of CEMETERIES in your county for threats or endangerments**

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Please provide brief comments about work related to monitoring the physical condition of historic resources. Also comment on work that altered the courthouse, square, schools, or plazas if you checked those boxes above.:

We have a very active cemetery committee whose individual members frequently visit older cemeteries to report damage to tombstones and the condition of the cemeteries themselves. One member has arranged to place a fallen tombstone on its pedestal and had it cleaned. Other members assist with the regular workdays at the Conroe Community Cemetery as this old African American cemetery is being restored. Our webmaster is regularly adding cemetery and historic structures links to our website map so that they can be readily located.

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**Q23**

Are you aware of ongoing work that is managed by individuals / organizations other than the CHC?

**Know of others who planned or pursued work that altered a historic SCHOOL complex / campus**

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Please share what you know about work related to courthouse, square, schools, or plazas that are marked above as having been altered by individuals / organizations other than the CHC.:

Members of our Commission have consulted with Conroe city council members as the city is planning for the conversion of the 1934 Sam Houston Elementary School to a city performing arts center. One of our Commission members who is employed with Conroe ISD is collecting historical information on those schools that are presently over 80 years old so that historical markers can be prepared for some of these sites and for former locations of Conroe ISD schools.



**Q24**

Please read the survey description above. If your CHC has performed work associated with formal cultural and historic resource survey, use the comment box below to describe survey work completed in 2021. Include work to initiate or maintain existing surveys. Skip question if CHC has not performed this type of survey work.

A husband and wife who are members of the local churches of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons), along with other members of their churches, have volunteered their time to methodically update our Historical Resource Survey which was last conducted in 1980. Over the past year (2021) they have performed detailed digital historical surveys for over 40 buildings and maintained a spreadsheet showing those structures that have been lost since 1980. To date they have surveyed 79 sites in Conroe and should finish the Conroe survey by the end of the summer of 2022. When possible, they personally interview building owners and others who can share their personal knowledge of the history of each structure. As each survey is completed, it is emailed to Chairman Larry Foerster who reviews the material and shares it with city council members and community leaders. The information has generated a buzz in Conroe and pride as government and business leaders are very interested in learning more about the history of the structures in Conroe business and old residential districts. Much of the data being collected will be used for the preparation of county or state historical markers of these structures. Once available on our website and the Conroe website in the near future, these surveys will be useful for the new Conroe Main Street Program. After the survey is completed in Conroe, the team will move on to other communities throughout Montgomery County.

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**Q25**

Check the box for each work item in which your CHC was actively involved in 2021.

**Consulted with citizens about potential / ongoing historical MARKER topics**

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**CHC appointees volunteered at a historic site that is open to the public at large**

,

**Provided an inventory of subject MARKERS for public use (brochure, website posting, etc.)**

,

**Provided an inventory of CEMETERIES for public use (brochure, website posting, etc.)**

,

**Provided educational events / presentations / info on preservation / history to audiences outside your CHC**

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**Provided educational events / presentations / info on preservation / history geared toward youth / schools**

,

**Promoted historic and cultural sites to develop and sustain heritage tourism initiatives**

,

If you'd like, provide brief comments about work related to boxes checked above. Consider providing details for these events in the Project Description section at the end of this report.:

Our webmaster is constantly collecting information for the website map that identifies and locates by GIS coordinates cemeteries along with county and state historical markers. Working with our local newspaper reporter, we provide historic photos and information for Sunday articles on a variety of historic families, places and events in Montgomery County. Members our Commission are often invited to speak to civic clubs around the county on various historic topics. Members of our Commission promote local historic events like the annual "Christmas in Historic Montgomery" where they act as docents at historic homes in the town. Others are engaged in the annual "Voices of the Past" historic cemetery tours in Montgomery. Several of our members are on the boards of the Heritage Museum of Montgomery County, the Magnolia Depot Museum, the Nat Hart Davis Museum in Montgomery and the Fernland Historical Park in Montgomery. Many of our members are involved in promoting and disseminating the updated Lone Star Monument and Historical Flag Park "Activity Book" designed as a fun way to educate 4th grade students on the history of the Texas Revolution and the Texas Lone Star flag, for which Montgomery County is its birthplace. The annual History Road Rally, which was in Willis in 2021,

provides another way to promote local history, as did the November 6th "Texas Legacy Flags Fest" held at the Lone Star Monument and Historical Flag Park, an outdoor museum of the battles of the Texas Revolution.

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Page 14: Community Awareness, Participation, and Revitalization

**Q26**

Check the box for each work item in which your CHC was actively involved during 2021.

**Identified and/or researched historic bridges and/or bridge types in your county**

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**Participated in community planning activities to ensure historic and cultural resources were considered when development or zoning is discussed by city officials**

,

**Participated as a consulting party in a federal Section 106 undertaking review**

,

**Involved in local economic development plans / projects / organizations**

,

If you'd like, provide brief comments about work related to boxes checked above.:

Members of our Commission continue their efforts to save the historic 1910 truss bridge over the San Jacinto River west of Conroe. The bridge has been abandoned for over 50 years and in is serious disrepair. We continue to explore ways that the bridge can be disassembled and relocated to another spot in the county. The concern is that (1) it is very fragile and will require experts to move it and (2) the cost of such an undertaking is significant. One developer continues to express an interest in moving it to his development in Montgomery but has not made the necessary financial commitment to date. Our Commission chair, Larry Foerster, is an advisory member of the Conroe economic development committee, the Conroe Architectural Review Board, and the new Conroe Main Street advisory board. Another member, Ryan Londeen, is a member of the City of Montgomery's Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and has been instrumental in the MEDC's growing interest in funding new historical markers in the City and promoting its history on the City website. Chairman Foerster frequently provides Section 106 information to engineering firms and developers who have plans for widening highways and building new cell towers across the county. As Montgomery County continues its unparalleled rapid growth, county commissioners and city leaders rely on our Commission to provide information related to the preservation of historic cemeteries and historic sites.

**Q27**

Are you aware of ongoing work in your county related to these preservation-related matters?

**Local organizations (other than CHC) that use hotel / motel tax to fund preservation projects/organizations**

,

**County or municipal historic tax exemptions and/or incentives for qualified properties**

,

**Areas of development within county that could impact cultural / historic resources**

,

Please share what you know about work related to the boxes you checked above.:

The amazing growth of new residential and commercial developments in Montgomery County can threaten historic sites and structure, as developers are looking for new locations for their projects. While many developers often ignore the history of any community, more and more community leaders are beginning to recognize the importance of preserving our county's rich heritage and insist that their community heritage be preserved when developer's are making their plans. The city councils of Conroe and Montgomery are particularly interested in historic preservation as members of our Commission have enlightened them on the value of historic preservation as it promotes tourism; HOT tax, sales tax and property tax revenues; and adds to the quality of life for their citizens. Working with the city visitors and convention bureaus and partnering with other nonprofits that promote history, these cities are finding that HOT tax revenues can be used to promote historical tourism by making their downtowns a weekend destination for visitors from Houston and other large metropolitan areas. The charming historic building in these towns are being converted into B&B venues and into boutique stores, wineries, restaurants and pubs. Recently the City of Conroe implemented a tax incentive program for property owners who restore the facades of their homes in the Conroe Uptown Residential District in accordance with the guidelines set by the Architectural Review Board. CHC chair Larry Foerster is a member of that Review Board. Commission ember Ryan Londeen, a civil engineer, is always involved with planning on the Montgomery EDC board.

**Q28**

Partnering is more than just attending meetings of other organizations. Effective partnerships build a stronger and more diverse preservation community. Check each of the individuals and organizations with which your CHC partnered during 2021.

**City officials,**

**Local law enforcement,**

**Local businesses,**

**Libraries,**

**Museums,**

**Cemetery organizations,**

**Main Street managers and/or board members,**

**Tourism organizations / visitors bureaus,**

**Educational institutions (school districts, community colleges, universities)**

,

**Chambers of commerce / downtown business associations**

,

**County officials,**

Please note below any other partner organizations that fall outside the categories listed above.:

Aside from the partnerships referenced above, the Commission has been partnering with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department as it is searching for a new location for its museum, which is presently located in the law enforcement center but unavailable to the public. Commission members are also providing historical information on the past county sheriffs for that department's website. We are also assisting the Sheriff's museum director in his efforts to locate and provide historic markers for the gravesites of former county sheriffs. Our Commission members are actively engaged in restoring the historic Tamina Sweet Rest Cemetery in south county, the resting place of African Americans, and also assisting with the restoration of the Conroe Community Cemetery, another African American cemetery. Chairman Larry Foerster and member Ron Saikowski are regularly engaged with the Conroe Main Street manager Frank Robinson and the Conroe CVB director Shannon Overby in projects that promote the mission of the newly instituted Conroe Main Street program. Similarly, members Ryan Londeen, Brenda Beavens and Ann Meador work with Montgomery city staff on heritage events in old Montgomery. The Conroe Chamber of Commerce and the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce partner with our Commission on various events promoting the birthplace of the Lone Star Flag and the history of these two communities. We also partner with the County Central Library's Family History and Genealogical Department by assisting with locating additional archival materials that draw visitors to that department. Many of our members are active board members of all four county/city museums

active board members of all four county/city museums referenced above. Many of our members are engaged in the annual Montgomery "Voices of the Past" cemetery tours.

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Page 16: CHC Partnerships (continued)

**Q29**

Check the boxes that reflect your CHC's role with museums.

**CHC appointees volunteer with museum/s,**

**CHC appointees sit on board of a county museum**

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**Q30**

When considering your overall workload, check the range that applies to your CHC.

**26-50% of CHC time spent on museum work**

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**Q31**

Provide the name, address, phone number, and operating hours for each of the museums the CHC operates.

Not applicable

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Page 17: 2021 Project Descriptions

**Q32**

Project Description #1 — Describe ONE project, effort, or service provided by the CHC. Project descriptions should highlight CHC work that falls under one or more of the following: a project, effort, or service that resulted in a preservation and/or protection outcome. a project, effort, or service that was developed to educate the citizens of your county and/or celebrate history with the citizens of your county. a project, effort, or service that was developed to educate audiences outside of your county or celebrate history with audiences outside of your county. Description must include the following information to illustrate the nature of efforts involved: your county name CHC's role in the project, effort, or service note partners in planning and/or implementation; note how each contributed impact of the project / effort / service— attendance, improvements made, public benefit, etc.

Montgomery County Historical Commission assisted in organizing, printing, and funding the unique Texas Revolution "Activity Books." As Montgomery County is the "Birthplace of the Lone Star Flag," we use these books to provide a fun way for children of all ages to learn more about the history of the Texas War for Independence. The books also promote the Lone Star Monument and Historical Flag Park, an outdoor museum in Conroe dedicated to the memory of the Texian volunteers who fought for Texas independence. Partnering with the Friends of the Flag Foundation, we provided information and ideas for the materials in the books. With the financial support of our County Commissioners Court and the City of Conroe, we have purchased 1600 of these activity books and have solicited sponsors that have provided additional funding for thousands of more books. Several CHC members have been delivering and promoting the Activity Books at local 4th grade classes in public and private schools and at civic club meetings. A PDF copy of the book is now available at our CHC website so that children across the county, state and nation have an opportunity to enjoy the book and learn more about the history of the Texas Revolution. As it is intentionally not copyrighted, we invite other historic organizations around the State of Texas to offer this PDF copy on their websites. This thereby not only stimulates interest in Texas history and the Lone Star Flag, but it promotes more tourists and local residents to visit the Lone Star Monument and Historical Flag Park in Conroe.

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Page 18: 2019 Project Descriptions

**Q33**

**Project Description #2** — Describe ONE project, effort, or service provided by the CHC. Project descriptions should highlight CHC work that falls under one or more of the following: a project, effort, or service that resulted in a preservation and/or protection outcome. a project, effort, or service that was developed to educate the citizens of your county and/or celebrate history with the citizens of your county. a project, effort, or service that was developed to educate audiences outside of your county or celebrate history with audiences outside of your county. Description must include the following information to illustrate the nature of efforts involved: your county name CHC's role in the project, effort, or service note partners in planning and/or implementation; note how each contributed impact of the project / effort / service— attendance, improvements made, public benefit, etc.

The Montgomery County Historical Commission was a co-sponsor of the first "Texas Legacy Flags Fest" in Conroe on November 6. Sponsored also by the Friends of the Flag Foundation and the Montgomery County Veterans Memorial Commission, the Flags Fest offered visitors an opportunity to tour the Lone Star Monument and Historic Flag Park and adjacent Veterans Memorial Park; inspect close-up first responder vehicles; and learn more about the various cultures that contributed to the Texas fight for independence, and which continue to add to the fabric of our diverse Texas culture. This included the Alabama-Coushatta Indian and the Mexican "Tejano" contributions. Many ancestors of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence were present to participate in the festivities. Various members of our CHC helped organize and participate in the celebration to honor first responders and military service members. The theme was "Texas Heroes—Past and Present." The ceremony was purposely set near the date of Stephen F Austin's birthday. The flag raising ceremony honored the memory of the Texian and Tejano volunteers who fought at the various battles of the Texas War for Independence in 1835-1836. The ceremony also honored other military members who have served our nation. The participants included county and city leaders. The Texas Army, the Texas Volunteers and the Rolling Thunder cannon also participated in this solemn event. Other history and genealogical societies also participated with their booths. Former CHC member Jim Walker was recognized for his contribution to the planning and research for the Lone Star Monument and Historical Flag Park and for faithfully serving as its Flag Master for almost ten years, routinely replacing tattered flags and giving tours of the park to visitors.

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Page 19: 2019 Project Descriptions

**Q34**

**Project Description #3** — Describe ONE project, effort, or service provided by the CHC. Project descriptions should highlight CHC work that falls under one or more of the following: a project, effort, or service that resulted in a preservation and/or protection outcome. a project, effort, or service that was developed to educate the citizens of your county and/or celebrate history with the citizens of your county. a project, effort, or service that was developed to educate audiences outside of your county or celebrate history with audiences outside of your county. Description must include the following information to illustrate the nature of efforts involved: your county name CHC's role in the project, effort, or service note partners in planning and/or implementation; note how each contributed impact of the project / effort / service— attendance, improvements made, public benefit, etc.

The Montgomery County Historical Commission sponsored its 8th annual History Road Rally in Willis, Texas on February 27. Promoted as "Driving in the Past Lane," each year the event features the local history of a different area of Montgomery County. This is a fun family-friendly event. Participating teams represented Texas communities in and beyond Montgomery County. The 15 teams enjoyed following clues and finding their answers to county and state historical events, sites and individuals as they drove their vehicles around the Willis-Danville area for two hours. The teams were delighted to meet Willis Precinct #1 Commissioner Robert Walker and Justice of the Peace Wayne Mack. Each participant received a souvenir "History Road Warrior" button. The teams returned for free pizza and drinks while their answer sheets were judged. The three winning teams received trophies and \$25 gift cards courtesy of our annual sponsor: Gullo Ford, Gullo Toyota and Gullo Mazda automobile dealerships of Conroe. There are many loyal families and friends who participate each year in this event. We rely on our high school Youth Advisory Board students to help us run the event each year, and they enjoy the comradery with each other, the participating team members and our CHC members.

Page 20: CHC Comments for the THC

**Q35**

Share your thoughts on THC and/or CHC Outreach services that have helped your CHC.

The THC website is wonderful! It is easy to navigate and the first place we go for information about what other CHC's are doing. We like the regular THC emails promoting Texas history and historical sites. We really appreciate the "how to" instructions that are useful for our CHC projects. The THC website provides a meaningful way to communicate with the THC and other CHC's. We will miss Amy Hammons but look forward to our ongoing relationship from Nano. In Amy's absence, he continues to be a great resource. Leslie Wolfenden has also been very helpful for our team working on our county's historical resource surveys. In addition, Jenny McWilliams has been very supportive of local cemetery restoration projects. Please keep providing the free THC webinars, as they are watched by both CHC members and other non-CHC partners in our community who avail themselves of this useful training tool.

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### Q36

If you'd like, share information not already submitted in this report. Feel free to comment on specific preservation issues in your county--successes and/or challenges. This year, we'd like you to comment on how CHC activities have been impacted by the current pandemic or reopening of facilities and services.

Montgomery County is fortunate that it is not governed by county leaders who are intimidated by the COVID-19 pandemic that appears to have curtailed the lives of others in some metropolitan areas of the state and in other parts of the country. It is fair to say that our lives have generally returned to normal, and our CHC operates as it did pre-pandemic. People are out visiting each other in local restaurants, pubs and museums. Our CHC public events were generally well-attended in 2021 as more and more people engaged with each other without masks.

The foundation of the Thomas Chapel Methodist Church in Willis was leveled in September to save the foundation and the church structure itself. The Commission provided \$12,500 in funds for the project that was supervised by Commission members Ron Saikowski, Ann Meador and Annette Kerr. Built in 1899, this African American Church is the oldest church in continuous use in Montgomery County.

More and more local businesses are attracted to our historic buildings in Conroe, Montgomery and other county communities. We are pleased to see these structures being remade into local eateries, pubs and stores that attract many local and out of town visitors who enjoy the laid-back atmosphere of our non-metropolitan communities. Many building owners in downtown Conroe are asking for state or county historical markers on their buildings as they see that property values and business success are enhanced by such markers. As there seem to be flight from Houston and other big cities, more and more people are moving to Montgomery County where they can live a slower-paced lifestyle in what they hope is a safer and friendlier community. These new settlers are attracted to the heritage of their new hometowns, and we believe our efforts to celebrate our local history helps them sink their roots deeper into our county's soil.

The new pictorial history book of Conroe was published and distributed beginning in February. Produced as part of the Images of America series by Arcadia Publishing, the book is a collaboration of several local historians: Conroe Courier news editor Sondra Hernandez and CHC members Joy Montgomery, Dr. Robin Montgomery and Larry Foerster. This has become a popular tool with local merchants in downtown Conroe.

The Conroe Community Cemetery has also been targeted by both our CHC and the THC for preservation and recognition. Cemetery restoration leaders Jon Eden and John Meredith will be featured speakers at the upcoming Real Places Conference. This previously overgrown cemetery is the burial site of Sgt Luther James Dorsey of the 10th US Calvary, the only known Buffalo Soldier buried in Montgomery County. It is also the final resting place of other notable African American leaders from our community. In 2020 and 2021 our Commission donated the necessary funds to install a fence along two sides of the cemetery to protect the tombstones from vandals. Several CHC members have participated in the ongoing restoration of this cemetery. It recently received a Texas historical cemetery designation.

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