MORE TOURIST OPPORTUNITIES IN EAST TEXAS

It is good to be back in Texas and to be meeting
with this very enthusiastic and dynamic Chamber of Commerce.

At a time when we as Americans seem to glory in criticizing ourselves to death it is good to see an organization that not only believes in the future is bright but is busy with making it that way.

Yes, it's good to be back in Texas and back to Texas A&M. Sometimes it pays to get away from familiar surroundings--to get a new perspective.

Certainly, my experience last year in Canada proved to me that in spite of our relatively small staff in our Recreation and Parks Department, we have the most dynamic program in this country that relates to tourism development. We do not brag just that most people of Texas aren't aware of it.

In all our programs--research and teaching as well as extension--we try to remain relevant. At the same time that we are seeking better science and facts in this field, we know that our programs must relate very closely to the needs of people like yourselves.

So, this is why I am here tonight--to tell you about some of our research and planning ideas in your area.

Of course, I'll try to resist the temptation of giving you an examination at the end of my talk.
Yes, it's even good to get back to where we hear Aggie jokes.

But, don't you believe you don't hear them elsewhere.

In Canada, we had an Aggie on our faculty in the School of
Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph.
He proceeded to set me straight on Aggies and Aggie jokes.

He said that they go back a long time—even before Texas A&M
was founded. He said that even Adam was an Aggie.

Of course, I had to ask why he believed Adam was an Aggie.
"Well, he said, "who but an Aggie could sit beside a
beautiful nude girl and do nothing else but eat an apple?"

Well, I'm sure you didn't come to hear me tell Aggie jokes.

You have asked me to talk about MORE TOURIST OPPORTUNITIES IN EAST TEXAS.

This is very easy for me because there are abundant opportunities
for tourist development in this very interesting region.

How can I be so positive?

First of all, you have the people resources to do many things.

Without people who have the interest, enthusiasm, ability and
commitment, nothing is accomplished.

If you turn your talents and attention toward tourist development
and all that it entails, I am confident you can make much progress.

And, in addition to this, I have some solid evidence—proof, if you wish—
proof that the resources and opportunities are here.

This is based upon some research and conceptualizing we did a
few years ago here in East Texas.

In a tourism planning class I teach, we always work on a
real piece of geography to study tourism planning theories
and principles.
I believe we already have placed a lot of emphasis on advertising and promotion. Most of our state agencies work throughout the country on this, and this is as it should be. However, I am also concerned about the tourism product—what is provided to the tourist.

For one of these classes, we chose East Texas. Tonight, I want to use this as a base for proving that East Texas does have potential and that much can be developed here in the future—so that you can have even more to advertise and promote.

Before I describe this, I feel the need of defining what I mean by tourism planning.

I doubt if any word creates any more negative reaction, especially in this country and in Texas.

Most often, we think of planning as giving up our rights to someone else, usually to government.

When I speak of planning, particularly tourism planning, I am talking about your planning—what you do every day to direct your decisions.

As I look at the collective action by individuals in tourism, I see a major void.

Generally, all our individual planning is not coordinated with that of anyone else.

While I understand the reasons for this, I find it hampering progress in tourism development.

I argue that because we want to do all our planning on our own, we are now falling short of realizing the full opportunities that lay before us.

1. I believe we are not providing the satisfactions to visitors as well as we might;

2. I believe we are not as successful in business as we might be and

3. I believe we are not protecting our resources as we might.
Personally, I believe we could do a much better job on all counts if we did collaborate and cooperate to a greater degree.

This would force us to take a broad look at our total region to see what we could do together for the common good.

I am delighted to see representatives of the Rio Grande Valley—this is good. But, what are we doing even within East Texas to plan for development? This is also needed.

As an introduction to our findings and recommendations for East Texas let me say that I believe tourism planning must contain two very important ingredients: facts and concepts.

First, we need a collective understanding of what is really here—facts about many aspects of the resources and development that has already taken place.

Generally, throughout the country, facts on tourism are lacking. We do not have the institutions, such as we have in agriculture, that are regularly compiling facts.

Just this year, several of us formed the TEXAS CHAPTER of the TRAVEL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION, hoping that this will stimulate the desire to collect more facts about tourism in Texas. I was pleased to see the research by Pan American units on tourists in the Valley. This gives the Valley people a sound basis for planning ahead.

Second, the facts and information are of little value to us unless we have the insight and creativity to do something—to take action.

We need ideas. We need to experiment.

In tourism, as in any product creation, this is risky. It can be very costly. But, I see no substitute for it.

If tourism is to move ahead, it cannot rest on its past laurels. It must create something new every day.

Hope you will leave tonight with some ideas—ideas that will stimulate you to work more closely together for better tourism in East Texas.
Tonight, I want to use some slides of your region,

primarily to suggest how you might utilize your resources for tourism.

What are your strengths, and possible weaknesses,

and how might your resources be developed.
This diagram shows the 10 major steps in the process of regional tourism planning.

The BLUE steps—1, 2, 3—represent the FACT-finding phase.
The GREEN steps—4–7—represent the CREATIVE (idea) phase.
The YELLOW steps—8, 9—are the development of feasibility.
---these final steps were beyond our scope; these would be the next step in determining whether projects would be profitmaking or not—whether they might better be developed by non-profit organizations or governments.

The last step, 10, is really the RESULT; if we have looked at the resource base and if we have looked at the needs of travelers and recreationists, we should be able to say that our plan is one that is ECOLOGICALLY and FUNCTIONALLY sound.

Study Region selected was similar to Woodland Lakes Region of the highway departments book, LAND OF CONTRAST, includes the FOREST TRAIL, and is similar to the TRADITIONAL EAST TEXAS, but doesn't quite include all within East Texas Chamber of Commerce. --Hope people from Dallas--Beaumont don't feel offended.

--Before one starts such a project, to plan such a region, I have found it necessary to agree on definitions. Not everyone agrees on a definition of tourism. Many would not include resorting or vacation homes—this was true of the tourist agency of Ontario.

Personally, I include all five: VACATION HOME USE TOURING-SIGHTSEEING RESORTING ATTENDING EVENTS

We approached the East Texas Region with intent of locating areas with the greatest potential for all 5.

The theory used is based on the assumption that if you are going to spend money and talent on physical tourist development, it might be best on lands with the greatest potential.

My research has shown that there are at least 10 factors that contribute to this potential.

We made an effort to examine all 10 factors in E Texas.

- History
- Existing Attractions
- Topography & Soils
- Water & Waterlife
- Vegetative Cover & Wildlife

- Climate
- Esthetics
- Service Centers
- Transportation
- Markets
Our first step—Research of the resource base.
By "resources" we mean both natural and cultural.
First item in this research was history because historic redevelopment is increasingly important to tourism.

Discovered 6 historic themes with potential for future development:

1. Indigenous cultures—Indian: Hasina culture—Caddo Tribe; later Alabama/Coushatta.
2. Exploration & Early Settlement—1835 Spanish settlement along Camino Real (His home in Huntsville).
3. Texas Revolution and the Republic—1835-1845 Ex. Sam Houston, president of Republic.
4. Cotton plantation era—Civil War—1840-1865
5. Saga of river boats. Great traffic/romantic
6. Oil & Lumber Booms

Concluded: Great deal of history, legend and lore to be developed.

Second item of research: Existing attractions.

Public: National Forests
      State Parks
      City Parks
      Big Thicket

Discovered there were quite a few, developed by governments.

Private: Heritage gardens

Concluded: Some very well done, but not numerous, such as Heritage Gardens.

Third item of research: Topography & Soils

Important for: Building construction
                Plant support
                Erodability
                Septic tank systems

Concluded: Generally does not represent serious limitation. Occasional small steeplechase areas mountainous.
Fourth item of research: WATER and WATERLIFE
74 major lakes, 536,944 surface acres.
Concluded: region, well-blessed with reservoirs for fishing, boating, swimming
Caution: future drawdown could have impact.

Fifth item of research: VEGETATIVE COVER & WILDLIFE
Concluded:
- Forests cover 61 percent of land - add to appeal
- Variety of plant materials adds to attractiveness
- Often coincide with water, game and other resources
- Deer and small game can be found generally over all region.

Sixth item of research: CLIMATE
Concluded:
Does not vary much over all area
Although annual differences exist, generally suited to tourism and recreation for most months - much superior to northern states and Canada - not just in winter but SPRING & FALL as well.

Seventh item of research: ESTHETICS
Not a separate item; depends on the others
Concluded:
Forest-water mixes, especially when combined with some land relief.
Spring wildflowers -- a spectacle
Only negative: where man has developed industry, cities...
Eighth Item of research: SERVICE CENTERS

Concluded:
Generally well-distributed; bulk in center third of area
Region well supported with infrastructure
Few have really oriented to tourism

Ninth Item of research: TRANSPORTATION

Concluded:
Mainly served by highways; some air
Linkage to attraction areas not best
Linkage with market areas could be improved
Majority of all tourists to Texas come thru E Texas

Tenth Item of research: MARKETS

Concluded:
Approx 5.8 million, within 200 mi of center of Region
Approx 12.3 million, in prospective weekend market
Probably the built-in E Texas market is greatest for most tourism activity.

Brought all these factors together to make a SUMMARY ANALYSIS. Came to following conclusions:

1. Is a real sense of cohesiveness about EAST TEXAS:
   tradition; image; resources

2. This sense is not generally carried over into political or planning or organization, etc.

3. New reservoirs--prime stimuli for tourism; now combines with forests, history, etc.

4. Strong potential for vacationhomes.

5. Markets are abundant but competition is keen; weekend best

6. Access and circulation can be improved.

7. Roadside scenery is generally pleasant; but tends to lack contrast; sometimes bad.

8. Intensive, planned unit development, yet to happen. Too much of low quality.

9/ Service centers are well distributed; need better orientation to tourism.
-- We then summarized all ten factors in terms of both location and category of tourism.

For example, this is a map of the region showing the areas where the ten factors were strongest for OUTDOOR RECREATION potential.

(This does not mean that other areas have no potential; it merely states that the natural and cultural resources, the service communities, the transportation and market factors are strongest in the extreme locations colored brown.)

For OUTDOOR RECREATION, these factors suggest potential for development of water-oriented activities
forest trails
primarily for Texas markets but also for outside visitors.

-- This map shows how these factors grouped themselves for VACATION HOMES.
There seemed to be excellent opportunities, but only if well planned.
It is important to keep the waterfront open to the public;
to appeal to several strata of market;
to upgrade nearby development.

-- For TOURING SIGHTSEEING, this was the result of summarizing the supporting factors.

Within the areas colored brown, there seemed to be potential for three types of Touring-Sightseeing:

1. historic areas
2. wooded areas
3. water areas, provided the scenery is protected

-- Even though resorting is a term less popular today, we continue to see it happening—expressed in beach motel, hotel, and mobile home recreation vehicle developments. The main definition is that all activities for the entire vacation stay are on the site.

The resource and enhancing factors showed this kind of distribution for RESORTING.

I see no reason why there couldn't be major year-around resorts established in East Texas.
The category of EVENTS is more difficult to map because almost anywhere can an event be developed.

However, based upon natural and cultural, particularly historic background, we came up with this generalized map of greatest potential for event development.

It seems to me that East Texas is well on its way toward development of its events with things like:

Dogwood festivals
Crafts Fairs
Woodville Gospel Quartet Festival
The many official Bicentennial activities

We felt that there were opportunities for even more:
water-oriented festivals
autumn color festivals
historical events, celebrations, pageants

* This summarizes our recommendations for the 5 categories of tourism, considering the entire region.

As I said before, planning is based as much on creativity as it is on facts. So, I asked the students to choose four subregions within East Texas—SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONES—and make recommendations for development.

These are the four:
A. CADDO LAKE VACATION AREA
B. EL CAMINO REAL RECREATION AREA
C. THE BIG THICKET
D. RAVEN RECREATION AREA

Here are some of their recommendations for the CADDO LAKE VACATION AREA.

-- Suggested theme of CADDO LAKE VACATION AREA:
Synthesis of the old South and the Civil War.

Marshall could serve as the principal service center with focal point for tourist services.

-- The following RECOMMENDATIONS were offered:

We suggest that Jefferson continue its historical restoration and redevelopment work; refine it into the Williamsburg of the Southwest.
-- We suggest that the Big Cypress Bayou be restored to a navigable channel and that the restoration of steamboat travel from Jefferson to Caddo Lake be established again.

-- We recommend the revitalization of lakeside vacation home development on Caddo Lake. Visits since we started the study indicate that considerable progress is being made on this concept.

-- Because of the rich past history and lore surrounding the ancient Caddo Indians, we recommend the establishment of a Caddo Indian Cultural Center with emphasis upon interpretation of this culture. This could be developed in conjunction with the Caddo Lake State Park.

-- Because of the surface growth on much of Caddo Lake we recommend research of water hyacinth and other plant removal to improve the water quality.

-- This region was the center of a special plantation culture which has all but disappeared. This culture produced a distinctive blues music style and was popularized by Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter. Therefore, we recommend the establishment of a National Leadbelly Blues Festival.

-- Although fishermen know where they are headed on these waters we believe there are opportunities to establish special tourist cruises through the outstanding scenic areas of Caddo Lake. A special Cypress Water Trail.
-- Along with such water trails, we recommend the establishment of land trails--both by bus and on foot--to interconnect all area attractions.

With all the tourist assets of this area, and especially when they are fully developed, there should be opportunities for scenic bus tours.

-- Certainly, the Lake O' the Pines is a tourist attraction resource within this total complex.

Therefore, we recommend closer linkages with the other attractions of the region.

* These were some of the conceptual ideas that came as a result of our study of the region.

We know full well that any one of these represents great effort and expenditure of money but we believe that the opportunities are there.

-- The next area caused considerable discussion and not everyone was in agreement. There were historical reasons for tying the El Camino Real with the Toledo Bend region but this tended to make it a less cohesive development region.

We called area "B" the EL CAMINO RECREATION AREA.

The central theme is early Texas history and active outdoor recreation.

-- The primary service centers would be Nacogdoches and San Augustine; together with other supporting service areas.

-- We felt the need to bring the scattering trends of development together and suggest the establishment of a major recreation/resort community between Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn Reservoirs.
Mission Tejas -- We recommend that the early history theme be expanded greatly with the establishment of an El Camino Real-Texas History pageant.

Supporting attractions could be a Davy Crockett Trail Ride on the El Camino Real from Nacogdoches to San Augustine and other areas, including Mission Tejas.

San Antonio Road -- The students suggested an El Camino Real Annual Road Race. This would be an amateur event requiring closing of connecting roads but could focus attention on both spectator sports and the history of the region.

Forest Trail -- With special easements and development of services along the way, special horse, and bike-and-hike trails could be established between Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn reservoirs.

Old railroad beds could be utilized for this.

Toledo Bend -- A natural, of course, is the establishment of resorts--fully developed vacation complexes that could attract both outstate vacationers as well as Texans. Texas has not been known for resorting but has tremendous assets--especially during the beautiful and comfortable spring and fall seasons.

Such a development would complement the vacation home complexes already under way.

Marina -- Although some marinas now or being established are of good design quality, we recommend that some means be initiated by the people of the area to eliminate or upgrade those that are of poor standards.

Rayburn Res. -- Because water resources are special assets, we recommend that they be treated as special places.

This may mean special design and planning controls that keep views and access open to the public.
Our final recommendation for this subregion is the establishment of special scenic trails to provide the visitor with opportunities of viewing both long distance vistas as well as closeups of plants and animals.

Subregion "C" was influenced greatly by the ongoing steps for establishing the Big Thicket Recreation area. We visualize, however, the entire ecological and traditional Big Thicket as an overall subregion, rather than just that to be developed by the government.

The central theme suggested was DAY USE and CAMPING.

It seemed appropriate for Woodville to serve as the primary service center and be expanded to really take on this role.

We recommend that Woodville make a major effort toward developing itself into a Pioneer Village attraction city. This is not to compete with the excellent private attraction of Clyde Gray's.

It is to expand on this theme of making that area a center for 19th century activities.

We suggest the development of a system of hiking trails and primitive campgrounds which would center on the Big Thicket.

Another recommendation is the establishment of an arboretum and nature center emphasizing the variety of flora and fauna indigenous to the area.

An ideal location would be at the edge of the pines and hardwood forests.
Modern tourists are unfamiliar with former methods of forestry and timber production.

Recommended is the establishment of an interpretive center that explains the entire history of logging in this region.

The Moscow-Camden Railway could be a vital part of this attraction. Furthermore, it could serve as a focal unit for a Logging-Lumberjack Festival, capitalizing on the logging heritage and skills of the past and present.

It seems that it would be very advisable to establish scenic road tours to connect the various attractions of the region.

In all such instances, many problems have to be worked out to maintain the attractiveness of the scenes along the way. In many instances, it may be necessary to have fee simple control; in others scenic easements may be sufficient.

Of course, the very fine Indian attraction should be linked with other attractions of the region.

Our final comment on this subregion is to make sure that the governmental development of specific Big Thicket areas are linked with the other attractions of the area. This requires innovation and collaboration on the part of all in the area as well as the government.
**SPECIAL DEVOTIONS **

-- The fourth area "D" centers around Livingston and Conroe.

The central theme for this region is outdoor recreation.

**Sam "Raven"**

-- Perhaps because of the dominance of the raven in this area or because the students saw this sign, they identified it as the RAVEN RECREATION AREA.

**Livingston Map**

**--** The first recommendation for this area was to develop a series of water festivals on Lake Livingston. Boat races, water skiing contests and fishing derbys would be appropriate.

**Vacation Home**

-- Our recommendation included and expansion of what is already well under progress—major rural/commuter residential community for Houstonians, capitalizing on the resource assets of the area.

**Sam Houston Home**

-- It was suggested that the historical theme centered on the Sam Houston home in Huntsville could be expanded greatly.

**Trinity River**

-- We believed that there were opportunities for excursion boats and interpretive tours on the Trinity River.

**Kids**

-- Another recommendation was the expansion of youth camping and conservation training in the Sam Houston National Forest.
The abundance of water resources suggest the opportunities for well-designed water-oriented vacation complexes. The key to reaching future markets is good planning.

There was general agreement that there were many opportunities of providing the outside visitor with much more guidance and information on the legends and lore of the region.

As was discovered in all the areas, there appeared to be many opportunities for the development of many nature and historic trails.

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This summarizes our OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE S.

1. Certain attraction areas could be improved with better transportation access from market areas.

2. With much greater diversity of new attractions, for example those beyond fishing and boating, we believed that many new market segments could be tapped.

3. However, this is going to take heavy investment both public and private--in new attraction complexes.

4. The existing service centers are well distributed but most could be improved with greater orientation to the tourist.

5. Much work is yet to be done in the information and direction systems. We found for example, that one attraction was described in four different ways on four separate maps and there was not one sign to tell us which way to turn or how to reach our destination.
-- I would like to conclude with this slide of an outstanding new development in East Texas.

And, as I close, I remind you again that I believe you would benefit by a much more complete study of your region, especially with greater input from you who are deeply involved in tourism here.

But, even with this amount of study, we were convinced that there were, indeed, many opportunities ahead for expanding East Texas tourism--

in ways that would even improve the environmental setting as well as produce great economic impact.

I hope that you are convinced as well.