

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Texas Sea Grant unveils Low Power Radio for Calhoun County coast

CALHOUN COUNTY, TX — The Texas Sea Grant College Program, Calhoun County Commissioners' Court, Texas AgriLife Extension Program and Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce will hold a ribbon cutting at 4 p.m. Tuesday, June 30, in the park at Magnolia Beach to dedicate a new Low Power Radio station, K-YAK 1610 AM.

K-YAK is a pilot project to broadcast educational information to visitors and local residents in the area from Magnolia Beach to Indianola. The "Your Area's Knowledge" broadcasts will focus on local history, coastal ecology, boating safety, wildlife and other topics of interest for tourism and recreation.

"The area from Magnolia Beach to Indianola is a well-traveled vacation spot — the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recently rated the area as one of the top 10 beaches in Texas," said Rhonda Cummins, Texas Sea Grant Extension Agent-Coastal and Marine Resources for Calhoun County.

"In addition to local residents and summer vacationers, the area is popular with Winter Texans. Many of the messages in this project will be geared to the winter visitors, but multiple loops will also be developed and changed periodically to appeal to residents and frequent visitors," she said.

"People driving along the beach area are an audience with a means for tuning into AM radio. Low Power Radio offers a low-cost, non-regulated opportunity to reach a broad audience with relatively modest effort and share information about local history, coastal ecology, boating safety, wildlife and other information that can encourage tourism and the enlightened use of our natural resources."

Because the range of a Low Power Radio antenna is only from ¼ to 2 miles, depending on terrain and atmospheric conditions, three antennas are planned in Calhoun County to cover the entire beach area.

For more information about this project, contact Cummins at 361-552-9747 or via e-mail at rdcummins@ag.tamu.edu.

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K-YAK FACTS:

- Low Power Radio (LPR) is a specialized form of AM radio broadcasting first used as a communications tool in the 1970s to inform travelers of traffic and weather conditions. More recently it has been used in state and national parks, airports and theme parks to provide information to specific audiences.

- The LPR units being used for this project are Procaster™ Low Power AM transmitters purchased from ChezRadio in Ontario, Canada. FCC approved as a low power “Part 15” device for unlicensed operation, they can be used to legally broadcast any audio content anywhere in the United States without the cost or limitation of a broadcast license.
- Three kiosks in the area that show maps of the kayaking trail will also advertise the availability of local information on K-YAK 1610 AM and its supporting website (<http://kyakradio.tamu.edu/>). The radio station logo and website will also be displayed on the restroom buildings at Indianola Beach Park.
- A brochure describing the LPR project will be available at the website’s download page and in printed form at the Port Lavaca Visitors Center, the Calhoun County Extension Office and at local businesses throughout the area.
- Downloads of the “Your Area’s Knowledge” broadcasts and text of the scripts will be available on the download page of this website. The first such broadcast, “Safe Boating Tips” by Calhoun County Game Warden Mike Mitchell, is now available at <http://kyakradio.tamu.edu/downloads.html> as an mp3 with an accompanying text document of the script.
- Texas Sea Grant’s partners in this project include the Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce, members of the Texas Master Naturalist Program, the Calhoun County Commissioners’ Court, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas State Game Wardens and local volunteers.

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The Texas Sea Grant College Program is a partnership of university, government and industry, focusing on marine research, education and advisory services. It is part of the College of Geosciences at Texas A&M University. For more information, visit <http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/index.html>.

The Texas Sea Grant Extension Program is a joint program of Texas Sea Grant and Texas AgriLife Extension, both outreach components of the Texas A&M University System. Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. For more information, visit <http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/Outreach/extension.html>