

## WHAT IS THCDA

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The Texas Hill Country Dow Alumni is the organization representing Dow retirees living in the general region west of Houston, Texas in the Texas Hill Country. Many Dow retirees moved into this part of Texas leaving larger Dow retiree areas such as the Lake Jackson/Freeport area and the Houston area. Consequently, they did not have any representation or contacts with many of their former co-workers.

When Ray and Esther moved to the Texas Hill Country they decided to organize the scattered retirees in this area. At that time it was not possible to obtain home addresses of retirees and the only way to spread the news was by word of mouth.

The first organizational meeting was held in Austin, Texas in 1991. Eight couples met at the Hilton Airport Hotel. The enthusiasm was contagious, and so plans were made to bring the organization to life. The next year the first major reunion was held in Fredericksburg, Texas. Thirty five people were expected, but the famous Dow word of mouth brought 75 to the luncheon meeting. The entire group was so happy to see each other after having been separated since retiring. Even after the four hour gathering many were still visiting with each other in the parking lot of the restaurant.

Thus was the THCDA launched into annual gatherings in various hill country locations giving everyone a chance to make the easy trip to the selected site. It grew into a two-day event so points of special interest in the area could be visited.

Each site location brought out assistance in planning the reunions by retirees who lived at that location. After seven years of reunions, Chuck Schwartz of Taylor, Texas, persuaded the membership to organize into an official Board, with volunteer officers for one year terms. Since 1998 officers and site chairpersons have carried the work and continued to meet annually. Membership grew, thanks to lists from Midland headquarters, and it now stands at 322 retirees.

There are no membership dues for Texas Hill Country Dow Alumni, and reunions are covered by individuals paying for most of the meal cost with help from DOW. In the past, HADA's annual budget included expenses by THCDA and the hill country group receives funds from HADA. If members of the hill country group join the HADA group by paying HADA's annual fee, then retirees in THCDA receive HADA's newsletter and are eligible to join in HADA activities.

The HADA newsletter receives news from THCDA members to include in the newsletter. Many of these members have and continue to contribute to their local communities in various ways. Some have worked with their town officials in assisting at schools, with civic organizations, working with Habitat for Humanity, volunteering at

soup kitchens, helping at holiday meals for the poor and elderly, working with AARP as consultants for income tax reports, etc.

Dow retirees living in the Texas Hill country come from various Dow locations. Most of them are from the Texas Division at Freeport, some are from Houston engineering, Louisiana Division, Midland Corporate headquarters, Pipeline Division, Pharmaceutical Division, LaPorte plant, Dowell, Europe divisions, Torrance, and Oyster Creek. One member, J. T. Middleton, has been making the long drive from Fayetteville, Arkansas annually.

Needless to say, the reunions have continued to be received with enthusiasm and are well attended. Even the Houston area HADA members make the trip to enjoy the reunions of the Texas Hill Country group. It is anticipated that this group will continue to gather for socializing, getting updates on Dow activities in the business world, and contribute to advertise in their own way in the name of Dow through their civic activities and volunteer work