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Ellis County Walked Across Texas – and then some!

“Walk Across Texas,” a fitness challenge sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, got Ellis County moving in a big way this year, with approximately 22,000 miles logged.

“That’s almost one complete turn around the earth,” said Rita Hodges, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent. “People are still logging their miles, and we encourage them to keep right on going.”

A brief wrap-up ceremony was held on Saturday, June 27, with County Judge Carol Bush handing out medals and certificates.

“There were sixteen teams along with some individuals walking, for a total of 135 people participating,” Bush said. “We also had three school teams, with 80 people walking, and they walked approximately 4,000 miles.”

Bush also noted cost savings to the community based on the number of participants who may have avoided diabetes by becoming physically active – approximately \$639,000 to date.

“Our goal is a million dollars saved,” said Hodges. “Imagine how great that would be – for all these participants to be able to say they were part of something that saved the community a million dollars.”

The team that logged the most mileage during the eight-week event – 2014 miles -- was somewhat prophetically named the “Walking Winners.” Members Sky Holman, Grey Holman, Matthew Holman, Monica Holman, Lynda Robinson, John Cookman, Taylor Cookman, and Amy Cookman received medals for their participation. Matthew Holman was also recognized as the top individual miler, logging 640 miles in eight weeks.

A ten-week workplace wellness challenge for County employees ran concurrently with Walk Across Texas this year, with 61 employees participating. The challenge included both physical and emotional well-being elements and was augmented by Revolutionary War history and trivia throughout. All employees completing the challenge are eligible for a \$25 gift certificate, and the County will be similarly rewarded by its health insurance provider.

Susan Howard, a first-grade teacher at Dunaway Elementary, spearheaded the Walk Across Texas participation there and was recognized Saturday for her efforts. Members of the volunteer

“Health and Wellness Task Force” were also recognized. These included Chairperson Debbie Corkin, Andy Corkin, Diana Buckley, Donna Evenden, Debbi DeMont, Lindsey Moseley, Ginger Cole, George Cole, Holly Cox, and Monica Holman.

“Mark your calendar now for next year’s Walk Across Texas challenge,” said Hodges. “We plan to kick it off in March, so it will be a little bit cooler, and we hope we will have even more participation.”

