

HSRDC Third Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Attachment D

State Festival 2016 – Why Waco?

Texas Federation of Square and Round Dancers asked Houston Square and Round Dance Council to consider hosting the 2016 State Festival. The last State Festival hosted by HSRDC was June 2010 at the Galveston Convention Center. The 2015 Festival will be at the Waco Convention Center. Waco guaranteed the same price if we held the convention there in 2016 as well.

At the May 11, 2013, HSRDC meeting, a motion was made for HSRDC to be the host for the 2016 State Festival and the motion was passed. It was also determined that a committee would be formed to conduct a search of the existing venues in the Houston area and see if we could hold the dance in the greater metropolitan Houston area. The committee members are: Lewis and Marilyn Chumbley, Secretary of TSFSRD (and president-elect for 2016), Bruce Behrens and Roxie Walker, President of HSRDC, Jim and Dee Stephens, past president of HSRDC (and president when the last state festival was held in Galveston) and Darrell & Susan Pittman.

We looked at many options and received bids from many venues in and around the Houston area. The two most promising and reasonably priced were Lone Star Convention Center in Conroe and Moody Gardens in Galveston. We also received bids from hotels in the area, such as the Greenway Doubletree (formerly the Renaissance), the Woodlands Inn and Conference Center and the Marriott Westchase. Because June is wedding season, and because hotels can get up to \$10,000 for a ballroom per night, they were not interested in accommodating our request for 6 dance rooms, plus other rooms at a price that TSFSRD can afford and to further complicate matters, flooring would have to be rented, as most of these facilities are carpeted. Reliant Center gave us a bid, which was considerably more than TSFSRD could pay and complications such as parking, ruled Reliant out as a venue. The George R. Brown said they would not consider renting to us until about a year away from the event. It seemed they were hoping to hook a bigger fish and didn't want to be tied to a small contract. Other venues we looked at were Merrell Center in Katy and Berry Center in Cypress. Both of those facilities are unavailable the first three weeks in June of any year.

The Lone Star Convention Center in Conroe is slightly on the small side for the State Festival, but we could have made it work. Some of the rooms have carpeting, but we could have made that work as well. The biggest problem with Conroe was the lack of convenient hotel rooms and the total absence of camping facilities. The facilities are there, but they are booked with other annual events, since that is a resort area. Given these issues and the fact that their price was slightly more than Waco, we ruled them out as a possibility.

Moody Gardens delivered a reasonably priced bid for the dance facilities, but there was a catch. They wanted a guarantee of 300 rooms for the weekend at \$199.00 per night (summer season rates). As a group, we decided that the room price was not in line with what dancers were willing to pay per night. Other hotels in the area are also much more expensive than they are in November, when we generally

have Hoedown. Also, that time of year on the island can get very crowded, as it is the height of vacation season. Overall, as a committee, we decided that Moody Gardens was not a viable solution.

That brings us back to Waco for 2016. The facility is a good size and will comfortably accommodate all of the dancers and the different dance halls. The hotel room prices are more reasonable and not as many are required to guarantee the facility price. There is plenty to do in and around the Waco area and many other hotels and restaurants. It's more centrally located in Texas, so the people from Amarillo or El Paso who want to attend will not have to drive as far. While it is not exactly Houston's backyard, it is not an arduous trip.

Even though it will be in Waco (if TSFSRD approves our bid), HSRDC will still be the host for the Friday night event. The Texas Callers Association sponsors the Thursday night dance, the host council sponsors the Friday night event and TSFSRD sponsors all of the Saturday events. What that means is that HSRDC will be responsible for manning the registration booth, will plan the caller line up (working with the President of Houston Caller's Association) and will get the net proceeds from the Friday night dance. It is up to HSRDC if they want to have a "Split the Pot", offer a raffle item or items or do any other types of fundraising.

The Board of Directors for TSFSRD will vote on whether to accept our bid during their meetings at the State Festival in San Marcos, June 6-9, 2013. After the vote, then planning will begin. Volunteers will be needed in many areas, so be thinking about what you want to do to help make the 2016 State Festival a huge success.