

September 27, 2010

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Texas Tech to Host Society of Environmental Journalists in 2012

The conference brings together hundreds of journalists, scientists, educators, government officials and other leaders to explore the many facets of environmental writing.

Written by [John Davis](#)

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Approximately 700 journalists from across the United States will attend the conference Oct. 3-7, 2012.

Texas Tech recently signed an agreement with the [Society of Environmental Journalists](#) to host the society's 2012 annual conference.

The event will run Oct. 3-7, 2012, and approximately 700 journalists from across the United States will attend the event.

"The fact that Texas Tech is hosting such a prestigious conference is a testament to the kind of university we are becoming," said President Guy Bailey. "Not only is it a great opportunity for Texas Tech and West Texas to showcase what we do here, but also it will have a positive economic impact on our region as these reporters are learning about us. We are proud to host such a venerable group – especially in light of the current environmental issues Texas Tech

is investigating with regard to the oil spill in the gulf."

Bringing the conference to Lubbock was the idea of Ron Kendall, director for The Institute of Environmental and Human Health. After reading about a recent SEJ conference held at his alma mater, Virginia Tech, he became intrigued with the possibilities of hosting a meeting at Texas Tech.

"I found out the previous two meetings were at Stanford and the University of Wisconsin at Madison – both of which are top-tier universities," Kendall said. "Last January, we invited the board of directors to come to Texas Tech to talk with us and see the facilities. The board members had excellent interaction with faculty, staff and the community. Now we have entered into an agreement to host the 2012 meeting in Lubbock.

"This is a huge coup for Lubbock to bring this kind of organization in so that we can interact and establish relationships with its members. After this, we'll have extraordinary outlets with which to communicate about our community and university initiatives."

SEJ's annual conference brings together hundreds of journalists, scientists, educators, government officials, environmental advocates, business representatives and other leaders to explore the many facets of environmental stories, said Beth Parke, executive director of the society. The goal of the conference is to help journalists working in all forms of media to improve the quality and accuracy of environmental



news reporting.

Each conference presents an opportunity to meet with other journalists, sit in on training, writing and computer workshops and attend panel sessions where current issues are debated by experts, policy-makers and experienced reporters from all types of media.

The annual conference also takes journalists out into the field, with full-day or half-day tours to environmental hotspots where issues may be explored on-site with experts on hand to present all sides and answer questions.

"The SEJ community is eager to explore environment-related issues of the High Plains region open to direct exploration in and around Lubbock," Parke said. "Our comprehensive agenda – with full-day tours, sessions and special events – will be enriched by the expertise of Texas Tech's distinguished faculty. We are especially interested in the work of The Institute of Environmental and Human Health, so relevant to environmental contamination, wildlife toxicology and biodiversity issues. I have no doubt that sessions on these topics in Lubbock will be quite compelling and enlightening, informed by two years of ecosystems studies in the Gulf Coast region."

Parke said the SEJ board has appointed Randy Lee Loftis, environmental writer for the Dallas Morning News, as SEJ's 2012 conference chairman. He will immediately begin planning the 2012 program.

The Society of Environmental Journalists is the only U.S.-based membership organization of working journalists dedicated to improvements in environmental reporting.

SEJ programs are designed to build a stronger, better-educated, and more closely connected network of professional journalists and editors who cover the environment and environment-related issues. SEJ's primary goal is to advance public understanding of critically important environmental issues through more and better environmental journalism.



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Story produced by the [Office of Communications and Marketing](#),

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[The Institute of Environmental and Human Health](#) develops environmental and health sciences research and education at Texas Tech and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

The institute's goal is to position Texas Tech as an internationally recognized force in the integration of environmental impact assessment of toxic chemicals with human health consequences, framed in the context of science-based risk assessment to support sound environmental policy and law.

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