

Austin American-Statesman

FINAL EDITION ■ WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2008 ■ 75 CENTS

esman.com



What the campaign will do and how to donate, **A4**

statesman.com/wildflowers

Learn more about Lady Bird's Legacy and what you can do to contribute to the campaign.

CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN

Help spread Lady Bird's legacy

On LBJ's 100th birthday, program to sow more wildflowers begins

By Janet Wilson

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Lyndon Baines Johnson championed scores of environmental bills during his presidency. He and his wife, Lady Bird, worked tirelessly to clean up America's highways, promote conservation and preserve the country's natural landscapes.

To honor that legacy and to help keep roadways, parks and neighborhoods in Central Texas awash in wildflowers, the Austin American-Statesman and several project partners

are launching Lady Bird's Legacy: Sowing the Future, One Seed at a Time.

The goal is to help nurture Mrs. Johnson's dream of beautifying America, especially the corner of it the Johnsons loved so much, the Central Texas area they called home. It also will boost the state highway department's wildflower seed budget.

Because of increased maintenance costs, in the past three years the Texas Department of Transportation has cut in half what it spends

See **FLOWERS, A4**

FLOWERS: Campaign combines plantings with education effort

Continued from A1

statewide on wildflower seeds — from \$1.8 million to \$900,000 a year. About half of that is spent in Central Texas, Director of Vegetation Management Dennis Markwardt said.

The new campaign, which begins today, when Lyndon Johnson would have turned 100, will continue through 2012, when Lady Bird Johnson would have celebrated her centennial birthday.

"We are pleased to launch this campaign and call on our readers to join us in honoring Lady Bird and the amazing work she did throughout her life to bring beauty and color to our roadways and parks," said Michael Vivio, associate publisher of the American-Statesman. "She led the way, showing us why preserving and beautifying our environment matters."

The majority of donations to the American-Statesman's Lady Bird's Legacy campaign will buy seeds for road crews to spread in Central Texas. It costs the state about \$2,400 per mile for wildflower seeds spread along roads with 30-foot rights of way. The state buys a mix of bluebonnet, plains coreopsis, Lance-leaved coreopsis and Indian blanket seeds that Markwardt says get more "bang for the buck." The cost per mile increases for roads with wider rights of way.

Donations also will buy seeds for areas not maintained by the highway department that had a special connection to Mrs. Johnson, as well as for custom seed packets that local fourth-grade students can plant at home or in their neighborhoods.

About the Lady Bird's Legacy campaign

- For one month each year through 2012, the American-Statesman will seek donations. The Austin Community Foundation is the fund administrator. Every dollar donated will be spent on seeds.
- Money raised through Lady Bird's Legacy will pay for plantings on Central Texas highways.
- Each year a special location will be chosen for seeding. In October, for instance, seeds will be spread on the north side of Lady Bird Lake, just west of the South First Street bridge. Other park plantings are being planned for this fall.
- The American-Statesman's Newspapers In Education Department and the Wildflower Center have created a curriculum to teach fourth-grade students about wildflowers.
- A special mix of seeds, created by the Wildflower Center and Native American Seed, will be given to children participating in the Lady Bird's Legacy educational campaign and to campaign donors to plant in their neighborhoods.
- Other partners in the campaign this year include Wildseed Farms, Austin Parks and Recreation, the Trail Foundation and the Austin Parks Foundation.

How to donate

There are two ways to make a tax-deductible donation to the Lady Bird's Legacy campaign.

■ Look for a coupon on E10 today. Send a check to Lady Bird's Legacy fund, P.O. Box 50066, Austin, TX 78763-0066.

■ Donate online at www.statesman.com/wildflowers.

Donors of \$25 or more will have their names printed in the American-Statesman and at statesman.com unless they wish to remain anonymous. Addresses and phone numbers will not be printed. All donors will receive a Lady Bird's Legacy seed packet. Individuals who donate \$500 or more and corporate donors will receive a print of the Lady Bird Johnson tribute cartoon by the American-Statesman's Ben Sargent.



Wildflowers do more than enhance roadways, said Susan Rieff, executive director of the

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, which Lady Bird co-founded in Austin in 1982. The center is the American-Statesman's main partner in the campaign.

"Texas wildflowers are beautiful, but that's only part of the story," she said. "They are a rich part of our natural heritage."

"They are climate-adapted, saving on scarce water and other resources. And they provide habitats for birds, butterflies and other wildlife," Rieff said.

"Frankly, planting wildflowers and native plants is one of the easiest and most rewarding things we can do to benefit the environment."

Austinite Luci Baines Johnson, the youngest of the Johnson daughters, recalled a hand-printed sign she saw as her mother's funeral procession traveled last summer from Austin to the LBJ Ranch near Stonewall, where Lady Bird and Lyndon Johnson are buried. A small child held the sign aloft: "As long as flowers bloom, Lady Bird will live."

"That is what this project is doing," Luci Johnson said. "Coming together to celebrate the natural world, and to secure it for tomorrow and future generations, and do it in memory of Lady Bird Johnson."

jlwilson@statesman.com; 445-3668

**YOU WORK HARD...
LET YOUR MONEY
WORK SMART!**

**25 Month CD
4.43% Interest Rate**

**4.50%
APY***

**13 Month CD
4.18% Interest Rate**

**4.25%
APY***

Franklin Bank

