

## 2010 IFEA Hall of Fame Nomination

### A. Individual Submitting Nominee

Kay Wolf, CFEE  
BorderFest and Hidalgo Festival of Lights  
704 E. Texano Dr.  
Hidalgo, TX 78557  
956-878-4688  
Fax 956-843-6461  
[hidkaywolf@aol.com](mailto:hidkaywolf@aol.com)

### B. Nominee Information

Hidalgo City Council  
Mayor John David Franz  
Mayor Pro-Tem Alvin Samano  
Council Member Pedro Fonseca  
Council Member Dan Dillard  
Council Member Siglinde Franz  
Council Member Guillermo Ramirez  
Address: 704 E. Texano Dr., Hidalgo, TX 78557  
Phone 956-843-2286  
Fax 956-843-6461  
[hidjoevera@aol.com](mailto:hidjoevera@aol.com)

1. Explain how your nominee has made a difference to the festival and events industry.

First let me explain the nomination. Our nominee is not an individual because no single individual in our community could have the level of influence as this group has. The nomination is for the Hidalgo City Council as a whole. There are six members including the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem and four council members. Collectively they have 108 plus years of support, involvement, influence, and dedication to not only Hidalgo's festivals (BorderFest and Festival of Lights) but to IFEA, IFEA Foundation, Texas Festival & Events Association (TFEA), Texas Association of Fairs & Events (TAF&E) and many Festivals across the Rio Grande Valley.

Each one of the council members have spent years volunteering, serving as chair persons and working with BorderFest and Festival of Lights helping provide the best experience possible for every person that attends either event. As BorderFest grew they recognized the need for more space and worked together to bring the vision of a 6,800 seat arena to fruition giving BorderFest and the City greater opportunities to provide the community and entire Rio Grande Valley with quality events and entertainment.

The City Council has supported IFEA, TFEA, TAF&E for more than 20 years attending conferences, speaking at conferences, donating auction items, buying auction items, helping provide decorations, and supporting staff who are or have served in leadership positions for all three organizations. They have individually provided money for IFEA Foundation Scholarship endowments for the TFEA Endowment, and the Vera Endowment as well as the TAF&E Scholarship Endowment.

When IFEA Foundation President Bruce Skinner resigned Hidalgo's City Council encouraged and approved allowing City Finance Staff overseeing the IFEA Foundation accounting in order to bring it up to date, get the books audited and to carry out day to day accounting saving the foundation hundreds of dollars and allowing all monies coming in to be used for the foundation, not on staff.

The Rio Grande Valley has numerous events across the Valley who turn to Hidalgo for help in many different ways. Events request to use ticket booths, food booths, trolleys, bleachers and other city equipment in order to put on their events. The City Council approves each request knowing that without their help most of these events would not be able to exist. As many of them have grown and been able to become a part of TFEA, IFEA and TAF&E they too have begun to give back to the communities and other events.

For more than ten years Hidalgo's IT staff has attended TFEA and TAF&E conferences at the city's expense to provide computers, LCD projectors and other technology help, setting up equipment for all sessions and providing help with both associations conference newsletters.

During 2001-2002 when TAF&E lost their staff the City of Hidalgo with the support of the Council brought the organizations administration in house at the city allowing the TAF&E Board time to regroup, continue operations and take their time in finding a new executive director.

If you take into consideration the moral support, volunteer support, the equipment support, the professional staff support and the financial support the Hidalgo City Council has given IFEA, TFEA, TAF&E and the many festivals & events in the Rio Grande Valley and Texas you would find hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings, thousands of hours of professional leadership, festivals and events growing and the real reason we exist "celebrating our heritage, culture and celebration in general."

The IFEA emphasizes its core values of Excellence, Sharing and Community. We know of no one that has emphasized and demonstrated this more clearly and more effectively than the Hidalgo City Council and the lives that they have touched along the way.

2. Submit a general overview of your nominee's career including organizations they have worked for, positions held, titles, awards, etc.

First, the 108 collective years serving on the Hidalgo City Council is very unique and extremely outstanding for any city to have a Mayor and Council that works together successfully over such a long span of time. Mayor John David Franz has served 20 years, Mayor Pro-Tem Alvin Samano 16 years, Council Members Siglinde Franz 24 years, Pedro Fonseca 28 years, Dan Dillard 16 years and Guillermo Ramirez 4 years. Their achievements have been many including the prestigious selection of All America City in 2004. The four Grand Pinnacles 7 TFEA Zeniths, and 8 TAF&E Zeniths' BorderFest has won and the two Grand Pinnacles, 2 TFEA Zeniths, & 3 TAF&E Zeniths Festival of Lights has won plus hundreds of other marketing awards both events have won are the prize awards in the Council's eyes as they believe these awards are community awards and share them with the community. The awards hold a place of honor in the Mayor's Office at City Hall for all to see.

Council Member Siglinde Franz was selected for the TFEA Hall of Honor several years ago and just last year Mayor John David Franz was selected as Border Texan of the Year. The entire Council has spent years volunteering, serving as chair persons and working with BorderFest and Festival of Lights since BorderFest began in 1976 and Festival of Lights began in 1990. They never miss an opportunity, either locally or in their travels, to talk about and promote Hidalgo and its festivals.

More importantly than this group's titles, awards and positions held is their dedication to making sure others are recognized for their achievements. When the completion of the City's Arena (Dodge Arena, now State Farm Arena) six years ago was nearing the Council made plans for a "Walk of Fame" walkway around the Arena to honor and celebrate the life, the achievements and the significant civic contributions that the outstanding men and women have made to their Rio Grande Valley communities. Each community/city in the Rio Grande Valley, Chamber of Commerce and Festival is asked to submit names each year prior to BorderFest for induction into the Rio Grande Valley Walk of Fame and as part of BorderFest the names are revealed and bricks are placed in the walkway for each inductee across the entire Rio Grande Valley and South Texas.

Twenty years ago the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce initiated the Border Texan of the Year Award in 1989 to pay tribute to individuals who have made contributions to the betterment of the Rio Grande Valley and South Texas. The award is given during the annual BorderFest celebration in Hidalgo, Texas. Consideration is given to civic leaders who have given unselfishly of their time and talents to make the Valley a better place to live. The committee only considers those citizens whose contributions have been motivated by community spirit and not financial gain. The Border Texan of the Year is honored at a dinner and reception. Proceeds from the event are given to the honoree's chosen charitable organization. More than a \$800,000 has been given for scholarships over the twenty years.

Additional awards came to the City Council in the way of economic development directly spun from the festival's successes. The 6,800 seat arena, a vision of the Council for many years was built giving the entire Rio Grande Valley an entertainment center and 300 jobs both full and part time. And a new 66 room motel was built adjacent to the arena. Festival of Lights draws 730,000 to the community in the month of December which played significantly strong on the decision for the 80,000 sq. foot shopping center built last year.

3. Describe the level of involvement your nominee has had with the IFEA during their career.

The City Council has and continues to support IFEA, TFEA, TAF&E for more than 20 years attending conferences, speaking at conferences, donating auction items, buying auction items, helping provide decorations, and supporting staff who are or have served in leadership positions for all three organizations. They have individually provided money for IFEA Foundation Scholarship endowments for the TFEA Endowment, and the Vera Endowment as well as the TAF&E Scholarship Endowment.

When IFEA Foundation President Bruce Skinner resigned Hidalgo's City Council encouraged and approved allowing City Finance Staff overseeing the IFEA Foundation accounting in order to bring it up to date, get the books audited and to carry out day to day accounting saving the foundation hundreds of dollars and allowing all monies coming in to be used for the foundation, not on staff which they continue to do today.

The City Council has provided support for Joe Vera to be fully engaged in IFEA and all its programs and leadership and has done so for more than 20 years. They believe in education and have started four volunteers in the CFEE program. They were in attendance in San Antonio when Joe Vera was inducted into the Hall of Fame and in Atlanta when Kay Wolf was inducted into the Hall of Fame. At least one or two Council Members attend the conferences each year learning new ideas and bringing them back to share with the community.

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#### 4. What void would there be if he/she were not an event professional?

Not an individual event professional but collectively if the Hidalgo City Council were not dedicated, supportive or involved in festivals and events in Hidalgo and the Rio Grande Valley there would certainly be a huge gap in the level with which BorderFest and Festival of Lights would be involved. Growth and the success of festivals in Hidalgo would be significantly less without their support as well as others in the Rio Grande Valley.

The City of Hidalgo's commitment to and sponsorship of BorderFest and Festival of Lights has made available to the festival color copying and sign-making equipment and the resources to hold printing costs to a minimum. Much of the colorful on-grounds decorations were made by City staff members, as was the City's unique parade floats again as part of the City's sponsorship as well as their cash sponsorship.

Regardless of the monetary sponsorship without the City Council's personal and collective leadership, support, knowledge, commitment and belief in Hidalgo, volunteers, staff, the festivals would not happen and there would be no support for IFEA, TFEA and TAF&E. It is a team with knowledgeable leaders that plays best and without the leaders of the team there is no game. The worth of this continuing commitment cannot be overstated.