

# Water lines go in for community garden

Published: Tuesday, June 27, 2006 12:36 PM CDT

Purpose of garden is to increase physical activity, increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and promote a sense of community

By Mary O. Esparza, staff writer

ALTUS - Oklahoma has the 14th highest level of adult obesity in the nation at 24.4 percent, costing Oklahoma \$1.3 billion dollars annually. The state spent an estimated \$243 per person in 2003 on medical cost related to obesity, which was the 33rd highest in the nation.

Many causes of the obesity include sedentary lifestyle and consumption of non-nutritive food selections. If current trends continue, today's youth may be the first generation not to outlive their parents.

The Jackson County Community Health Action Team (JCCHAT) recently applied for and received a small grant to begin addressing the issue at the local level in a non-traditional way. The grant will assist in the development of a Community garden in the Hispanic community. The intent of the grant is to increase physical activity, increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and promote a sense of community in a particular neighborhood in Altus.

JCCHAT in partnership with OSU Extension and the Templo Sinai Assembly of God Church, have begun working towards establishing a community garden at 914 N. Benson. The land was donated by the Templo Sinai church to help start the project. The City of Altus, water and sewer maintenance department, began digging for a new water line Friday to tap the water which will be used by the church and garden. Some of the vegetables to be harvested include squash, tomatoes, okra, peppers, watermelons and pumpkins.

After promoting the Hispanic community garden, the team hopes to create other neighborhood gardens.

Pastor Joe Tovar hopes the community will help sponsor the garden with donations of time, money and resources. Materials needed include top soil, seeds, plants, hose, storage building, fencing, gardening tools, manure and fertilizer. Hands on tasks include working the soil, moving top soil, installation of water faucet, sign painting, building the fence and trucking manure. There are also other ways in which to contribute, such as nutrition, public relations and community relations.

To be a part of the community garden project, contact Brandi O'Connor at 482-7308, or Pastor Joe Tovar at 477-4047 or 471-0628.