

[West Texas A&M University](#) (WTAMU) continues to emphasize teaching and service, but also encourages the faculty and students to participate in scholarly research and creative activities. Participation in these types of projects promotes the building of critical thinking skills and broadens the educational experience for students. Let's take a look at some of the externally funded projects taking place at WTAMU.

A matching grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce allowed for the August 2010 completion of Phase I renovations of the Palo Duro Research Facility located on Hospital Drive. The facility is intended to become the hub of the WTAMU Research District and currently houses the Alternative Energy Institute (AEI), the Environmental Quality & Technology Laboratory, and the University Research Alliance.

AEI, directed by [Dr. Byungik Chang](#), conducts research in the use of alternative sources of energy including wind, solar and biomass. AEI is also the major information resource of wind energy for the State of Texas. To learn more about wind energy and AEI visit their website at <http://www.windenergy.org>.

[Dr. Robert E. DeOtte, Jr.](#) heads the Environmental Quality & Technology Laboratory also at the Palo Duro Research Facility. Dr. DeOtte received a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to purchase state-of-the-art fluid and air quality measurement instrumentation for the new lab space. The instrumentation is used in studies of air quality and airborne pathogens.

[Dr. Emily Hunt](#), associate professor of mechanical engineering, has received the prestigious Young Investigator Award from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) for her ground-breaking work with nanomaterials. She and her students are also conducting research for B&W Pantex on the stability of aging explosive crystals. As a consummate recruiter of future engineers, Hunt co-authored a children's book, *Engineering Elephants*, introducing children to the world engineering.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds [Dr. Shiquan Tao](#)'s sensor design project. Dr. Tao is working on designs for a sensor that will be able to monitor trace components in the air without the interferences caused by relative humidity. Such sensors can be used for monitoring trace elements of ammonia found in the air at cattle feedlots.

One of WTAMU's more prolific researchers in the area of biology is [Dr. Raymond S. Matlack](#). Much of his research centers on his concern with environmental impacts such as pesticides, the loss of habitats, the spread of disease, and the effect of the wind turbine industry on small mammals. His projects receive support from both federal and private sources.

Within the College of Business [Dr. Duane J. Rosa](#), professor of economics, is participating in a sponsored research project funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) related to applied economic and engineering issues affecting transportation in Texas. He is also the Regional Director of the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) Regional Division.

The homeless and military in the Amarillo area have a tireless advocate in [Dr. Maureen "Mo" Cuevas](#) of the College of Education and Social Sciences. As the executive director of West Texas Family and Community Services, and supported through a grant from The Dallas Foundation, she partners with numerous local service organizations to provide emergency financial assistance and needs referrals for area veterans and their families. She also works with the city of Amarillo, funded by a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to provide case management and support services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

[Dr. Helen Reyes](#), head of the Department of Nursing, has received a training grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide financial support for nurses pursuing graduate education. This support provides additional nurses and nurse practitioners for underserved areas.

This represents but a small fraction of the exciting and important work led by WTAMU faculty, staff and students. I invite you to visit our web page <http://www.wtamu.edu/srs> on a regular basis to read more on the wide range of ongoing activities.