Creating Spanish Interpretive Materials & Programs at Aquarena Center

- Efforts are underway to make Aquarena Center more accessible to Spanish-speaking visitors by increasing the availability of Spanish-language information describing educational opportunities that help increase appreciation of the natural beauty, heritage and culturally diversity of people who settled at the headwaters the San Marcos River throughout its history.

- This effort supports the goal of establishing Aquarena Center, which showcases the beautiful San Marcos Springs, as the premier venue for interpreting natural history and the dynamics of aquatic resources.

- Providing bi-lingual interpretive opportunities also assists Texas State University in achieving their goals to attract and support a more diverse faculty, staff, and student body, to increase the intensity and scope of recruitment programs which focus on minority students and to help attain Hispanic Serving Institution status.

- Jane Moore, Outreach-Grant Specialist, is overseeing Project Coordinator Katie Handley, who is working with fellow Aquarena Center employee Roxanne Martinez and Lisa Korth of Texas Parks and Wildlife in developing the bilingual materials. Efforts have been initiated to include the Admissions Office and the key players involved in the School of Education’s STELLAR Grant program in developing appropriate bilingual educational materials.

- Jane is also working with the San Marcos Area Convention and Visitor Bureau and key visitor attractions in the area, encouraging them to provide financial support for an inclusive Greater San Marcos Area Visitors Guide that will include user-friendly language for Spanish-speaking visitors.

- Completed components include: English-Spanish: a Quick Reference Card for Hospitality, Bilingual Tours for PreK-2 School Groups and literature for a Spanish Self-guided Boat Tour; future projects target Spanish literature describing all of Aquarena Center’s exhibits and features, as well as providing hours, prices, directions to Aquarena and details about upcoming events.

NOTE: Since the project is not yet complete, actual numbers of people impacted by what the funds have made possible are not currently available. However, according to Rebecca Ramirez of the San Marcos Convention and Visitors Bureau, approximately two million annual visitors to the outlet malls are from Mexico, but these visitors don’t travel out into the community due to lack of Spanish materials and Spanish-speaking staff. If Aquarena Center had Spanish pamphlets available at the outlet malls and offered tours in Spanish, this would draw some of the almost two million Mexican nationals that visit the outlet malls each year.

If this drew 20% of the visitors to Aquarena Center, that would equal approximately 400,000 additional visitors to the park to enjoy the beauty of the San Marcos River and to experience and appreciate a special part of Texas State University’s campus. If just 1% of those 400,000 visitors decided to enroll at Texas State, that would be a potential 4,000 additional students per year coming from Mexico or from Spanish-speaking backgrounds.