



Blogger Emily Connelly included Liberty County's iconic buildings in a painting based on Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" that she created for a Christmas card competition at her high school. Connelly is one of two young people contributing to a blog about Liberty County, one of a set of Texas Target Communities initiatives in the county.

Teens blog about their home county in ongoing TTC project



Emily Connelly

Two teenage residents of Liberty County, Texas are posting ideas about improving their home county in a multimedia blog, [Trinity Time Hop](http://trinitytimehop.weebly.com/) (<http://trinitytimehop.weebly.com/>), one of a set of ongoing [Texas Target Communities](http://ttc.arch.tamu.edu/) (<http://ttc.arch.tamu.edu/>) initiatives aimed at helping residents of the rural area northeast of Houston shape their futures.

Blog contributors Sam Addington, a home school student,



Sam
Addington

and Emily Connelly, a freshman at Liberty High School, chosen for the project after winning an essay contest, are posting text, photos and videos to "Trinity Time Hop," which was launched in fall 2015.

By co-founding the blog, named after the Trinity River, which bisects the county in a north-south direction, the TTC and [Institute for Applied Creativity] (<http://creativity.arch.tamu.edu/>) are aiming to engage youth in TTC's initiatives, which include the creation of land use and transportation plans as well as marketing materials for the county, located in a rural area northeast of Houston.

Sam and Emily are building a virtual community to highlight the significance of their town and the changes it is undergoing, said Carol LaFayette, director of the IAC and professor of [visualization] (<http://viz.arch.tamu.edu/>).

In their blog posts, the teens envision changes that could benefit their county.

"As I drive through the streets of my small town I see so many things that could be," said Addington. "I have noticed an increasing amount of abandoned buildings and litter that lines our streets. Why do we not utilize these buildings for entertainment for our teens and children? Why do we not have enough pride in our town to put our garbage into a trash can, rather than the ground?"

Addington has also posted videos to familiarize the site's visitors with scenes of daily county life that include landmarks and an interview with proprietors of a local business.

In one of her posts, Connelly included opinions about Liberty County from her fellow high school students.

One interviewee wondered why some locals didn't take pride in their belongings "some people don't mow their lawns or even get their mail, he said.

Another interviewee thought that restoring the county's historic buildings would be a good idea.

"Even just putting a new coat of paint on our more historical houses would help," she said.

The two teens, scheduled to continue the blog through August 2016, are aided by Taylor Mullins, an undergraduate visualization student, Carol Skewes, publisher of the [Liberty Vindicator] (<http://www.thevindicator.com/>) newspaper, and Alexis Cordova, a Texas A&M [AgriLife Extension Service agent in Liberty County] (<http://liberty.agrilife.org/>). TTC and AgriLife have **partnered** to provide multidisciplinary services to residents in the county and throughout the state.