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## Bi-County Coop earns top honors

### Award given for reading program . . .



**BI-COUNTY COOP officials Bill Capers, left, and Pat Harper received a national award last month for the coop's reading program.**

A national award for excellence in reading was presented to the Freestone Navarro Bi-County Coop at the national conference held last month in Seattle, Wash. The Fairfield office was the only co-op in the country to receive the honor.

Co-op officials utilize the Read Right reading program, which has been a tremendous success, says Pat Harper, executive director of special education.

"These students are passing TAKS tests, when they never did before," Mrs. Harper adds.

The area program, in its third year here, focuses on junior high and high school students, as well as adults, who are not in special education. Students are recommended by parents and teachers, and some students have referred themselves, the director notes.

Potential Read Right students must be struggling, but have not yet been put in special education.

"This program is different," Mrs. Harper, herself a former teacher, points out.

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Specially trained tutors work with small groups of students for one period each day, and they continue with the program until their reading problem is remediated.

Comprehension, fluency and phonics make up the basics of the reading program, which essentially retrains the brain how to read successfully.

Read Right was developed by Dee Tadlock, who holds a PhD in reading. In 1978 her own son had reading problems, and Dr. Tadlock began a search for a style of teaching that would lead to better reading skills.

In 1988, a sawmill complex in Washington adopted Dr. Tadlock's new teaching method with great success and expanded it across the country, where it was adopted by other major companies, and eventually moved into education based programs.

Read Right research says that once a student has "graduated" from its program, the students continue to improve.

"Our numbers prove that," Mrs. Harper says.

According to their records, students who completed the Bi-County Coop program three years ago have a 100 percent passing rate with the TAKS test. Two year graduates have an 89 percent rate, and last year's students have an 85 percent rate.

"That is very exciting to us," she states. "All the students are progressing, some faster than others."

Bi-County Coop has helped 598 students read better in the last three years, and has 23 tutors working on the program, as well as co-op supervisor of instruction Bill Capers. They serve 10 school districts in Freestone and Navarro counties. Begun in 1975, the coop is funded from each district, using a percentage based on enrollment. They also receive federal special education money.

Co-op officials moved into a new office last year, located at the corner of Reunion and Bateman Streets in Fairfield.

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