



For Immediate Release
September 17, 2009

RSTEC Members Pledge Regional Collaboration for Shared Vision of a Vibrant Economy

The Rio South Texas Economic Council — a non-profit alliance of local governments, economic development organizations and stakeholders committed to working toward regional prosperity in the four southernmost Texas counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy — signed a “collaboration resolution” today. The resolution marked the members’ commitments to move the economic development collaboration process forward by working together on issues that make the region competitive; promoting the benefits of regional collaboration locally; and by assisting each other to land catalyst projects.

“We are collaborating to compete,” said Hidalgo County Judge J.D. Salinas III, RSTEC Chair. “We are no longer a string of small communities. Together, we are the largest border region in the United States, 2.3 million people strong. We’ve got a young labor force, we are a geographic gem, and we have a deep commitment to business development. It’s time we let go of that Friday night football mentality and work together as a team. When one of us wins, we all win. Today, we’re taking a step forward to find a way to make life better for the people of the Rio South Texas region.”

Members also unveiled the new Rio South Texas web site, www.riosouthtexas.com, and publicly presented the organization’s logo and slogan. These components will become integral parts of a national marketing campaign and brand identity.

"We're serious about working together to create new jobs in this region. We hired one of the best economic development consulting teams in the nation to help us develop our strategy. The marketing plan, logo and website they developed will help the Rio South Texas region stand out in the minds of

expanding companies and site location consultants," said Bill Martin, President of the Harlingen Economic Development Corporation and RSTEC Vice Chair.

The logo, which in its most basic concept is a star reaching across a river, stands for so much more. The star creates a bridge between two countries, symbolizing the regional infrastructure, the desire to collaborate, and the bi-national aspect of this massive undertaking. The river is a wave of change, signifying a distinct shift in mentality taking place in the Rio South Texas region: Less infighting, more cooperation.

The logo taken with the slogan, "Two Countries, One Region, Many Choices," signifies that the region can unite their marketing and economic development efforts to find solutions to the challenges facing the communities of the Rio Grande Valley and compete for jobs and investment against other regional markets in Texas and around the world.

"As a rural community, this partnership highlights an opportunity to promote the assets that make us a more viable and competitive region," said Rose Benavidez, Executive Director, Starr County Industrial Foundation. "This is something that can't be done alone by any one community. As a 'bookend' community, we know that we can add something to the mix—such as our quality of life traits, the hunting, fishing and eco-tourism—and we, too, can reap the benefits when big industry locates in this region."

RSTEC fashions itself as an organization that produces results for its members. Miki McCarthy, Executive Director of the San Juan Economic Development Corporation sees the tangible benefits of being a member.

"Besides creating a strategic alliance among all Rio Grande Valley cities, RSTEC provides smaller communities valuable resources such a property database which usually is too expensive for their limited budgets," she said.

The RSTEC website will eventually grow to house regional data concerning workforce statistics, demographics, tax structures and incentives, education resources, and a property database complete with interactive maps. The site is geared toward site selection firms and will be promoted heavily at state and national splash events, conferences and in publications. Other marketing collateral such as targeted mail outs, reports and publications, and business and industry case studies, will soon follow, keeping with the themes and

messages adopted by the organization. Developing a brand identity is a core component of this regional effort.

“This region has a lot of assets that can make us competitive with any area of the country. Regional collaboration has helped us to identify what those assets are and has allowed us to understand how we can use our strengths,” said Eduardo A. Campirano, Port of Brownsville Director/CEO. “Creating and maintaining a vibrant economy for years to come is a mutual goal of all the RSTEC partners.”

For further information: Sofia Hernandez, Rio South Texas EDC
sofia.hernandez@riosouthtexas.com (956) 318-2600 x5023