



Your

# COUNTY CONNECTION

HIDALGO COUNTY NEWSLETTER | JULY 2013

## RESIDENTS OF HIDALGO COUNTY:

With all the great news and recent developments for our area, I am certain that you can agree that these are exciting times in Hidalgo County!

There are many projects coming down the pipeline that are certain to transform the landscape of our great County. From transportation projects which will spur economic and commercial activity and trade, and attract industry, to the real and tangible outlook for developing a flourishing health care industry with the new medical school, Hidalgo County's future is looking brighter and more promising every day.

Our area is ripe with talent and opportunity, and we find ourselves at the perfect moment and perfect place for such tremendous change that will benefit our children and our community for years to come.

We welcome the challenges and opportunities that these new developments may bring, and look forward to continuing to work together with our County, state, and local leaders to bring these projects to fruition.

Thanks for your continued support,

*Ramon Garcia*



## HIDALGO COUNTY HONORS LEGISLATORS

At its regular meeting held in June, the members of Hidalgo County Commissioners Court recognized the extraordinary accomplishments achieved by the members of the Texas State Legislative Delegation representing Hidalgo County with a resolution in their honor. Hidalgo County was privileged to have seven legislators representing the interests of our area, including two senators and five representatives,

to which Hidalgo County Judge Ramon Garcia referred to as the "Dream Team." The members of the Court applauded the legislators for successfully passing historic legislation that will change the landscape of our region with the creation of a new university and medical school. The state delegation worked in a regional and bipartisan manner with their Rio Grande Valley

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## I-69 DESIGNATION FOR HIDALGO COUNTY

In May 2013, the Texas Transportation Commission announced final approval of the designation of an additional 116 miles of freeway in South Texas and Northeast Texas as part of the Interstate 69 system, including 13 miles in Hidalgo County. With this approval, three Rio Grande Valley highways are now, for the first time, designated as interstates and will be served by the Interstate Highway System.



lacy counties will be signed as Interstate 69 East, and 46 miles of the east-west US 83 freeway has from Harlingen to west of Mission has been designated as Interstate 2.

On the day of the announcement, Hidalgo County Judge Garcia remarked, "This interstate designation will have a tremendous impact on our

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The 13 miles in Hidalgo County along US 281 in Pharr and Edinburg will now be signed as Interstate 69 Central, a designation that will eventually extend northward to George West, Texas. In addition, US 77 through Cameron and Wil-

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## Hidalgo County Honors Legislative Delegation June 11, 2013



### I-69 Designation (Continued from Page 1)

community and continue to help promote our area as an economic leader. Improved transportation infrastructure is a commodity sought after by businesses looking for new markets, and today's news means that our area is now on a level playing field with the rest of the country."

Garcia added, "We applaud the efforts of all local leaders who have been pushing for this designation, over twenty years in the making. These leaders had the foresight and vision to form the I-69 Alliance to keep this project a priority; today marks a monumental moment of achievement for their efforts."



Garcia continued, "Hidalgo County's future continues to look brighter with the many new developments and recent focus on our region. This interstate designation, along with other transportation and economic development projects will continue to maximize Hidalgo County's competitiveness in a global economy."

A ceremonial unveiling of the I-69 and I-2 designations will be held later this month in both Hidalgo and Cameron counties.

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### Legislators (Continued from Pg. 1)

counterparts and their colleagues across the state to promote and successfully approve other legislation benefiting Hidalgo County residents. The County presented individual award plaques to each member of the delegation, in recognition of their tireless and diligent dedication on behalf of the citizens of Hidalgo County. The legislators each took a moment to extend their gratitude for the recognition, thanking the members of the Court for their continued support. Present at the recognition were Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa; Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.; Representative Terry Canales and his wife, Erica Canales; Representative Bobby Guerra; Representative Oscar Longoria and his wife, Jennifer Ruiz-Longoria; Representative Armando "Mando" Martinez; and representing State Representative Sergio Munoz, Jr. was his Chief of Staff, Richard Sanchez. Congratulations to the state legislators representing Hidalgo County for their notable accomplishments during the 83rd Legislative Session!

## HIDALGO COUNTY "DARES TO PREPARE"

To mark the beginning of hurricane season and to raise awareness of the importance of being prepared should a hurricane or tropical storm hit our area, Hidalgo County and the Texas A&M University Colonias Program, along with partner agencies and organizations, hosted the 4th annual "Dare to Prepare" fairs during the month of June. Eight fairs were held in various community centers and public places throughout the county, and attendees were given valuable information and resources from over 15 different agencies and organizations to help plan and prepare for a hurricane.

Hidalgo County officials and employees take preparedness very seriously, and encourage citizens to do the same for themselves, their families and their property. In communities such as ours where threats from hurricanes and tropical storms are likely, and where many areas are low-lying and prone to flooding, residents must take measures to be prepared.

Emergency officials recommend that families have a plan in place in the event a storm threatens our area. Residents best know the vulnerabilities of their own homes and properties, based on location, condition, and history; officials encourage personal responsibility through preparedness, and urge residents to have a plan in place and make arrangements before a storm hits. Some may choose to voluntarily evacuate to a safer location if they reside in low-lying areas or in areas with inadequate drainage. Those that choose to hunker down in place are reminded that they must plan and prepare for a minimum of seven days since relief forces may not be immediately available.

Through the "Dare to Prepare" fairs, Hidalgo County and partner agencies wanted to make it convenient for residents to acquire the information and resources necessary to prepare accordingly. Agencies such as the American Red Cross, the National Weather Service, and the Hidalgo County Health Department, and even businesses such as Home Depot, South Texas Health System, and Farmers

Insurance, educated and empowered the community with information, resources, and giveaways to help residents make informed and responsible preparations and to alert residents on the importance of preparing for a disaster.

At the fairs, residents were also encouraged to prepare by purchasing flood insurance and reminded that it takes 30 days for an insurance policy to activate; if a hurricane were to hit prior to the completion of the waiting period, the policy would not be in force and would



not cover any damages.

County residents were also encouraged to stay informed and aware by signing up to receive emergency and weather alerts via email, and by following the County's social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. For more information, visit the County website at [www.co.hidalgo.tx.us](http://www.co.hidalgo.tx.us).



## HONORING A HOMETOWN HERO - SPC. KEVIN CARDOZA

**H**idalgo County Commissioners Court recognized the family of U.S. Army Specialist Kevin Cardoza who was killed in action while serving his country on May 4, 2013. Spc. Cardoza's lifelong dream was to join the armed forces. He was halfway through a nine-month tour in Kandahar, Afghanistan, province when the vehicle he and four other soldiers from Fort Bliss were traveling in was hit by a roadside bomb. Spc. Cardoza died from injuries sustained in the tragic incident. Spc. Cardoza lived in Mercedes Texas and attended Edcouch-

Elsa High School. He enlisted in the U.S. Army after his high school graduation in 2011 and was assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division in Fort Bliss,

He was also a loving son and brother to his parents Ramiro Cardoza, Sr. and Maria Cardoza and three siblings Ramiro Cardoza Jr., Michael Cardoza and Leslie Lizette Cardoza who were present to receive the recognition along with his aunt, Ester Lopez, and cousin Joseph Lopez.



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court members expressed their condolences to the Cardoza family, and recognized and paid tribute to the life and legacy of

Texas. Spc. Cardoza was a dedicated father to his two daughters Deliliah Nevaeh and Melanee Renee Cardoza.

Spc. Kevin Cardoza for his patriotic service and ultimate sacrifice, which will never be forgotten.

**A**t the end of this month, Hidalgo County will be hosting the 15th Annual Operation Lone Star, an annual and weeklong event that offers FREE medical services to all residents and families in Hidalgo County. This tremendous effort is a joint project between many local, state, federal, and private partners, including the County of Hidalgo, the Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Military Forces, the United States Public Health Service, Remote Area medical Volunteer Corps, PSJA ISD and La Joya ISD, and the health departments from Hidalgo County, Cam-

eron County, and the City of Laredo, Texas.

Held annually across South Texas during the last week in July, Operation Lone Star will provide medical screenings, immunizations, diabetes screenings, mental health screenings, vision screenings at no cost to individuals. This is a perfect opportunity for families to access medical care, that may be difficult to obtain otherwise. All residents are encouraged to attend and take advantage of the FREE medical services for you and your family. Trained doctors and military personnel will be on hand to conduct immunization exams, diabetic screenings, blood pressure exams, hearing/vision test, sports physicals, screening referrals, dental health exams and much more!

Help us make Hidalgo County a healthier place for our families, and join us for Operation Lone Star 2013!



### OPERATION LONE STAR HIDALGO COUNTY DETAILS

#### LOCATIONS

**PSJA High School**  
805 W. Ridge Rd., San Juan, Tx

**Palmview High School**  
3901 N. La Homa Rd., Mission, Tx

#### DATES & TIMES

**Monday, July 29- Thursday, August 1**  
8:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Friday, August 2**  
8:00 am - 2:00 pm



Texas Division of Emergency Management Chief Nim Kidd and Texas Military Forces during OLS 2011