Press Release

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Summary: Implementation of Spanish Language Severe Weather Early Warning System for the Lower Rio Grande Valley

There are many barriers in early warning message notification that affect the residents in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The implementation of a Spanish Language Early Warning System for the Lower Rio Grande Valley is a representation of the Region’s local leaders and its jurisdiction's commitment to reduce threat and risks from man-made and natural hazards. In time for National Preparedness Month in September 2014, the regional system will further expand the translation of early warning messages from English to Spanish. It will assist Local Emergency Management Officials, The State of Texas, and National Weather Service (NWS) in furthering their mission of providing early warning message broadcasting of impending severe weather as well as relaying other important information such as mandatory coastal and inland evacuation to the over 90% Spanish speaking population within the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy.

"I am delighted to see the continued growth of our early weather warning system to include the Spanish language community. It is an invaluable resource for ensuring our majority Spanish-speaking region is kept safe. Having lived through calamitous weather events like Hurricanes Ike, Dolly, Gilbert, and Bullah, our community knows too well how critical receiving prompt and accurate emergency information is to preventing loss of life and property," said Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr., whose Texas District 27 includes Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties. Sen. Lucio worked with Texas Division of Emergency Management officials to secure federal grant funding for the project.
"I again thank all the business and community interests that stepped up to make the system possible. I especially thank Texas Department of Emergency Management Chief Nim Kidd, who first alerted me to the need for this system and whose thoughtful leadership is foremost responsible for an ingenious coordinated response," Lucio said.

LRGVDC staff worked closely with the City of Weslaco, TX, City of Pharr, TX, Texas Departments of Public Safety and Division of Emergency Management, and National Weather Service RGV/Brownsville in order to successfully implement this regional project that will benefit a population of over 1.2 million. The Spanish All-Hazards Radio transmitters in the Lower Rio Grande Valley will be of great benefit and this is only the fourth known system that's currently in operation within the Continental United States (Other locations: El Paso, TX, San Diego, CA, and Miami Dade, FL).

**A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, September 3, 2014 at the National Weather Service Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley Office between 9:00am and 11:00am. Office is located at: 20 S. Vermillion Road, Brownsville, TX**

"NOAA Weather Radio remains a vital component of the National Weather Service mission to save lives. In a world where residents can receive hazardous weather notifications from numerous sources, NOAA Weather Radio is still the most reliable source to wake people in the middle of the night when tornadoes, floods, wind, or hail storms are imminent," said Steve Drillette, Meteorologist-in-Charge with the NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley office. "We are truly grateful for the trusted relationships we have established with our local and state partners, and for their tremendous effort and dedication that made this potentially life-saving project possible."

For more information about this project and service contact the LRGVDC or visit [http://www.lrgvdc.org](http://www.lrgvdc.org) and the NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley at [http://weather.gov/rgv/?n=wxradiospansh](http://weather.gov/rgv/?n=wxradiospansh) (English) or [http://weather.gov/rgv/?n=wxradioespa](http://weather.gov/rgv/?n=wxradioespa) (Español).

Funding for this project was made possible by Senator Eddie Lucio Jr., Texas Division of Emergency Management, Cities and Counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, and Private Businesses and Partners.

**September is National Preparedness Month**

"Be Disaster Aware, Take Action to Prepare."