



Little Known Area One of Nation's Largest Regions

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Region is 3rd Largest Market in Texas and 23rd Largest Market in United States

Edinburg, TX, March 23, 2010 – What region of the United States straddles two countries, has a total population of 2.3 million, is the 8th fastest growing area in the U.S. and is located within 150 miles of 10 million people? What is being described here is Rio South Texas, the largest U.S./Mexico border region that is also among the country's largest metropolitan areas.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Rio South Texas is the 23rd largest market in the country. The region encompasses the four southernmost counties in Texas – Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy – along with the cities of Reynosa, Matamoros and Rio Bravo in Tamaulipas, Mexico. The market is not quite as large as Pittsburgh, but bigger than Portland/Vancouver.

Rio South Texas is also the third largest market in Texas, behind Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlington and Houston/Sugar Land/Baytown, respectively 4th and 6th largest MSAs in the United States.

The Cities of Rio South Texas

The major U.S. cities of Rio South Texas include: Brownsville, the region's largest city located at the very southernmost tip of Texas; Harlingen, which is roughly 25 miles north of Brownsville; and McAllen, located some 35 miles to the west of Harlingen. The region also includes the Gulf of Mexico beach resort city of South Padre Island and a number of other communities such as San Benito, Port Isabel, Weslaco, San Juan, Pharr, Edinburg, Mission, Roma and Rio Grande City.

Reynosa, just across the border from McAllen with a population of 750,000, is the largest Mexican city in the region. Rio Bravo lies in the center of the regional border and has a population of about 84,000 and Matamoros, just south of Brownsville is home to 423,000. All of these cities are in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas.

“What’s interesting is that few people know about this area, which happens to be not only one of the largest population centers in the country, but also a fast-growing business hub,” said Keith Patridge, President of the McAllen Economic Development Council. “The [Rio South Texas Economic Council](#) (RSTEC) is charged with first – getting this huge area on the map in terms of awareness, and second to tell our story about why this is a viable region for locating anything from a small business to a global manufacturing facility.”

To promote the collective assets of the region, RSTEC was formed in 2008. Representing all economic development interests in the region, the 21 RSTEC members are collaborating to attract private sector investment, economic diversification and business expansions in six core industry segments.

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