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MARCH 31, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RIO SOUTH TEXAS HIRES CONSULTING TEAM TO LAUNCH A REGIONAL APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rio South Texas, March 31, 2009 — The newly-formed Rio South Texas Economic Council — an alliance of local governments and economic development organizations in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy counties — has hired a top economic development marketing team to spread the word about the business-building potential of the region.

The team of Chabin Concepts, Austin Consulting, and Applied Economics was recently chosen to propel the Rio South Texas region to new heights.

“Our goal is to promote and enhance the knowledge of the region’s many assets among private investors,” said RSTEC Chairman Hidalgo County Judge J.D. Salinas. “We’ve got a young workforce, close proximity to the border and a low cost of living, and the thing is — we know that we’re one of the most dynamic regions with a great economic outlook, but do our potential investors know that? The purpose of hiring this marketing team is to make sure our unified voice is heard so we can compete for jobs and investments against other regional markets in Texas and around the world.”

The objective of the consulting team is to provide assistance and guidance in creating a marketing roadmap, along with tools and materials to accelerate marketing the region to identified key industry targets.

The project will kick off with a survey of local businesses to find out what they value about operating in the region and what can be improved. Business leaders are strongly encouraged to complete the survey online at <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB228XA76TRHF>.

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The comprehensive marketing strategy will include:

- A concise and factual statistical overview of the four-county economy and its current economic development trends and needs.
- A list of potential business and industry "targets" upon which the region can focus its external marketing and outreach campaign.
- An assessment of the current image of the Rio South Texas region among target industries and site location consultants and methods to improve the image.
- Potential marketing strategies to reach target industries and site location consultants, including Web site, logo, Internet marketing, direct mail, advertising, trade shows, tours or special events.

"Corporate site selection today is more sophisticated than in years past. While decision timelines are shorter, complexity has increased," Don Schjeldahl, vice president and director of Austin Consulting said. Schjeldahl is a site consultant who has directed more than 300 searches for business locations.

"For many projects, regional collaboration is required for getting on the 'radar screen.' Regionalism also provides effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing community shortcomings that stand in the way of successful job creation," Schjeldahl said.

Rio South Texas Economic Council will continue to work diligently with Chabin Concepts, Austin Consulting and Applied Economics to develop the economic development marketing roadmap for the four-county region.

About Chabin Concepts:

Chabin Concepts is an economic development consulting firm offering strategic solutions, marketing tactics and dynamic tools for communities, regions and states.

About Austin Consulting:

Austin Consulting is an objective in-house team of location consultants offering specialized experience in identifying the right location for the client's specific requirements.

About Applied Economics:

Applied Economics is an economic consulting firm specializing in economic and fiscal impact assessment, socioeconomic modeling, urban planning, and custom software applications.

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