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HIDALGO COUNTY PROMOTES PREPAREDNESS FOR 2013 HURRICANE SEASON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court

Ramon Garcia
County Judge

Joel Quintanilla
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Hector "Tito" Palacios
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Joseph Palacios
Commissioner, Precinct 4

Executive Office

Valde Guerra
Executive Officer

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Karina Cardoza
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Edinburg, Texas – To mark the beginning of hurricane season, Hidalgo County has been taking the necessary steps to be ready in the event a storm should threaten our area, and County officials encourage all residents to do the same. This year, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center has forecast a 70 percent likelihood of 13 to 20 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which 7 to 11 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including 3 to 6 major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5; winds of 111 mph or higher). These ranges are well above the seasonal average of 12 named storms, 6 hurricanes and 3 major hurricanes.

Hidalgo County officials would like to remind all residents to remember that storms are never fully predictable nor are the outcomes or spinoffs of such storm systems, as indicated by past experiences. Hidalgo County officials highly encourage residents to remain alert when hazardous weather is announced and to have a plan in place to keep you and your family out of harm's way.

Committed to the safety, security, and livelihood of all residents during any such situation, Hidalgo County is taking the necessary steps to prepare in anticipation of hurricane season. County Emergency Management Coordinator Oscar Montoya reiterates that this year's message of preparedness is once again one of personal responsibility. "Personal responsibility includes having adequate insurance for your homes to protect against loss due to hurricanes and flooding," Montoya said. "Also, inspect the area around your home and make your property clear of brush and residue that might clog up storm drains which can lead to flooding in your area during extreme weather," Montoya continued.

DARE TO PREPARE

County officials and employees are taking preparedness measures and encourage citizens to do the same for themselves, families and property. In communities such as ours where threats from hurricanes and tropical storms are likely, people must be prepared for a minimum of seven days since relief forces may not be immediately available. Residents must consider the importance of hurricane preparedness measures, and Hidalgo County is making it convenient for residents to acquire the information and resources necessary to prepare accordingly. Partnering with local community resources centers the Hidalgo County is conducting the 4th Annual "Dare to Prepare Hurricane Fairs" throughout the month of June. The fairs will educate and empower the community to make informed and responsible preparations and to alert residents on the importance of preparing for a disaster. **All residents and the media are invited to attend.**

The schedule for the "Dare to Prepare" fairs can be found on the next page:

For Regional Preparedness Information: www.facebook.com/RGVDisasterCenter
Follow our social media feed at www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus



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Location	Address	Date	Time
La Plaza Mall	2200 S. 10 th St., McAllen	Sat. June 15	11 am – 1 pm
San Juan CRC	509 E. Earling Rd., San Juan	Wed. June 19	10 am – 12 pm
San Carlos CRC	230 N. 86 th St., San Carlos	Thurs. June 20	10 am – 12 pm
Progreso CRC	510 FM 1015, Progreso	Fri. June 21	10 am – 12 pm
Palmer Pavilion*	301 E. Hackberry, McAllen	Sat. June 22	10 am – 2 pm
South Tower (Alamo) CRC	1429 S. Tower Rd., Alamo	Fri. June 28	10 am – 12 pm
Monte Alto CRC	25149 1 st St., Monte Alto	Fri. June 28	10 am – 12 pm

REGISTER WITH 211

211 is a tool to identify those residents that need assistance so that the County can prepare for a mandatory evacuation. If a resident has a disability or special health care need and requires assistance, has neither a vehicle nor a ride, or cannot drive nor arrange transportation during a mandatory evacuation, they are urged to register with 211.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Hidalgo County makes great use of its website and social media to ensure residents are informed and aware of what is happening in the County, and will continue to utilize these technological communications as well as traditional media (print, television, and radio) and grassroots communications to keep residents informed in the event disaster should strike. The County has seen the benefits of augmenting traditional methods with social media to communicate critical information during any type of emergency events, such as the recent hailstorms and dangerous weather outlooks.

Residents can visit the County website (www.co.hidalgo.tx.us) to view important information and updates before, during and after emergency events. Here, residents can sign up to receive Emergency Alerts via email notifications (www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/notifyme). Those who use social media are encouraged to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/HidalgoCounty and www.facebook.com/RGVDisasterCenter – a regional, Valley-wide page which includes information from bordering counties and cities). The County is also on Twitter (www.twitter.com/hidalgocounty), Youtube (www.youtube.com/hidalgocountytx), Picasa (picasaweb.google.com/hidalgocounty), and Instagram (www.instagram.com/hidalgocountytx).

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