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Hidalgo County Historical Commission. Hidalgo County, Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Hidalgo County Receives Certified Local Government Designation**

Edinburg, TX – August 6, 2025.

The Hidalgo County Historical Commission is proud to announce that Hidalgo County has been officially designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the National Park Service, in partnership with the Texas Historical Commission. This prestigious designation recognizes Hidalgo County's commitment to historic preservation, opening opportunities for the protection and enhancement of our rich cultural heritage. As a CLG, Hidalgo County and its municipalities will gain access to technical assistance, training, and crucially, eligibility for federal historic preservation grants, enabling a more robust and coordinated approach to identifying, protecting, and preserving the county's invaluable historic and cultural resources for current and future generations.

As Hidalgo County continues to grow and prosper, developmental pressures are prompting local leaders and community members to take an active role in identifying, protecting, and preserving the county's unique historic and cultural resources, especially those increasingly threatened by a combination of new development, deferred maintenance, and a lack of financial resources. As the newest Certified Local Government in Texas, Hidalgo County plans to utilize the CLG program to survey significant and endangered historic sites, plan for maintenance and rehabilitation, and support property owners, local stakeholders, and members of the general public on the value and irreplaceability of these historic places.

**A History of Hidalgo County:**

Hidalgo County was established in 1852 by John Young and named after Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a hero of the Mexican War of Independence. The new county was sparsely populated and predominantly settled by ethnic Mexicans living on ranchos owned by heirs of Spanish land grants called porciones, including those belonging to Salomé Ballí Dominguez. Young founded the county seat of Edinburg (soon renamed Hidalgo) along the Rio Grande as a strategic ferry crossing and midway point for steamboat traffic, mercantile goods, and military patrol units between Brownsville and Rio Grande City. Hidalgo County grew steadily during the remainder of the 19th century and served an important regional role during the era of Boss Politics, even as many Mexican-Americans became dispossessed of their land by both legal and coercive means.

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The coming of the railroad in 1904 spurred the county's first population boom as Anglo capitalists and land speculators from northern states invested in new irrigation technologies, transforming the South Texas brushland into an agricultural-resort paradise known as the Magic Valley, which relied heavily on Mexican labor to build up much of its modern social and civic infrastructure. In 1908, the county seat was moved to the townsite of Chapin, which is now the city of Edinburg. The citrus industry shaped the economy of Hidalgo County well into the mid-20th century, until a series of devastating freezes forced the region to diversify its economy and focus on industrial production and international trade. Today, Hidalgo County is home to over 870,000 people, 90% of whom are Hispanic, making it the ninth most populous county in Texas.

The Hidalgo County Historical Commission (HCHC) exists to advise the Commissioners Court of Hidalgo County, assist the Texas Historical Commission, and oversee the implementation of programs that promote and preserve Hidalgo County's historic and cultural resources. For more information, please email [hchc@co.hidalgo.tx.us](mailto:hchc@co.hidalgo.tx.us)

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