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Coastal Bend Community Visioning Project

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For immediate release February 20, 2009

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*****PHOTO/NEWS OPPORTUNITY*****

Feb. 28 BoldFuture Vision Summit to Prioritize and Refine Ideas to Create Implementation Plan; Coastal Bend Residents Weighed-in, Provided Thousands of Ideas to Reshape Course of Area's Future

More than 800 area youth voiced their own views about the future as part of essay contest

WHO: BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend Community Co-Chair Robert J. Gonzalez, and Institutional Co-Chairs Dr. Mark Escamilla, president of Del Mar College, and Dr. Flavius Killebrew, president of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

WHAT: BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend leaders will identify six major themes generated by thousands of ideas to jumpstart the future of the Coastal Bend while encouraging Nueces and San Patricio residents to attend a Feb. 28 Vision Summit to answer the question "Where do we want to be?"

WHEN: 11 a.m., Monday, Feb. 23

WHERE: First Floor Lobby, Corpus Christi Hall, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 6300 Ocean Drive (online map at www.tamucc.edu/about/campusmap.html)

VISUALS: Announcement by community and institutional co-chairs about the BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend Vision Summit scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 28.

Stacks upon stacks of entries submitted by over 830 pre-kindergarten through College-age residents to voice their views about how the Coastal Bend's future should be shaped as part of the BoldFuture Youth Essay Contest.

FYI: Since kicking off the community visioning initiative BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend, thousands of residents have answered the charge to "Be Bold!" and "Be Heard!" BoldFuture leaders are now asking the community to "Be There!" during the BoldFuture Vision Summit, scheduled Saturday, Feb. 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the American Bank Center, to refine and prioritize the thousands of Vision Ideas gathered over the past year.

Already more than 200 Coastal Bend residents have reserved their seats to participate during the Vision Summit. Organizers say there's still room for more participants. Vision Summit participation is free and open to the public. Parking, lunch and materials will be provided as part of the summit, but advance registration is required—call 825-2621.

Over the past year, BoldFuture volunteers gathered ideas during more than 80 community meetings, telephone surveys, online submissions and one-on-one conversations with area leaders. When asked what changes respondents would most like to see happen in the Coastal Bend to achieve their vision, the top areas of change for San Patricio County respondents were to create jobs, improve education, prevent crime, improve local government, improve recreational opportunities and manage growth. Nueces County respondents want to see improvements in education, lower taxes, job creation, roads, local government issues and crime prevention.

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Additionally, youth living in both counties expressed their concerns. More than 830 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten through college, submitted their ideas through a BoldFuture essay contest that asked, "I Can Improve My Community By..." Participants voiced their perspective about how their communities' and the Coastal Bend's future should be shaped.

Included among the many ideas submitted by youth participants are:

- implementing a "Coloring Corpus Christi" concept to rally people to help paint, build, design and add more art and culture into the city.
- implementing Teen Help, a Web site where teens can find support for their struggles.
- creating a club called "Nature's Friends" for children of all ages to pick up trash and find a nice field to plant a community garden. The homeless and hungry would be allowed to take food from the garden.
- creating a community center where citizens can get involved with their community and voice concerns to their town's elected officials.

The 16 winners will be announced and prizes awarded during the Vision Summit next Saturday, along with their work displayed for event participants to view and read.

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