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Coastal Bend Community Visioning Project

For immediate release February 27, 2009

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

Over 370 Residents Prioritizing and Refining Ideas During BoldFuture Vision Summit Tomorrow, Feb. 28
Youth essay winners receiving recognition, prizes during event

WHO: Over 370 residents from Nueces and San Patricio Counties participating during the BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend Vision Summit to refine and prioritize ideas collected during the past year through community meetings and surveys

WHAT: BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend Vision Summit

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 28

Best photo opportunities are:

- 1) focus area discussion sessions at 9:45 and 11 a.m.
- 2) full summit polling at noon
- 3) BoldFuture Youth Essay recognition and full audience session at 1 p.m.

WHERE: Watergarden Room, American Bank Center, 1901 N. Shoreline Blvd.

VISUALS: During discussion sessions, Vision Summit registrants conversing about current vision ideas and brainstorming to add new thoughts to one of six focus areas identified as part of the BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend initiative to chart the future for communities in Nueces and San Patricio Counties.

Participants will vote for the top vision ideas under each focus area as a means to prioritize those ideas, which will be used to create an implementation plan during the next phase of the initiative.

BoldFuture leaders recognizing the 16 Youth Essay winners, ranging in ages from pre-kindergarten to college, and awarding prizes. Based on age groups, grand-prize winners will receive Dell personal computers, Vtech Touch Tablet Advance computers or Leap Frog Tag Reading Systems.

FYI: Thousands of residents have answered the charge to “Be Bold!” and “Be Heard!” Tomorrow, Feb. 28, over 370 Nueces and San Patricio County residents will “Be There!” during the BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend Vision Summit at the American Bank Center.

Participants’ task tomorrow is to refine and prioritize or add to the thousands of vision ideas gathered over the past year as the initiative moves into the next phase to develop an implementation plan. Team leaders have organized those ideas into six focus areas, including:

- Community Identity and Leadership
- Sustainable Environment
- Vibrant Economy
- Safe, Healthy Communities,
- Thriving Education and Entertainment,
- Well-planned Region.

When registering, participants were given the opportunity to prioritize their top three focus areas for discussion and will engage in in-depth discussion of two during the summit.

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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BoldFuture initiative partners include the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces and San Patricio Counties, the San Patricio Economic Development Corporation, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Del Mar College, along with numerous community organizations that endorse the project, to focus on four key questions addressed during different phases.

- Phase I — “Where are we now?” — phase completed — included documenting the current profile of the community and residents’ values and concerns through telephone surveys of 850 residents in Corpus Christi and Nueces and San Patricio Counties.
- Phase II — “Where do we want to be?” — current phase-- in which thousands of community members shared their values and ideas for a unified community vision and will refine and prioritize them during the summit.
- Phase III — “How are we going to get there?” —next phase-- includes developing the implementation plan.
- Phase IV — “How are we doing?” —A&M—CC and Del Mar College are committed to conducting an annual check-up on the progression of implementation.

Youth living in both counties also 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.

Vision Summit organizers will hold a special ceremony at 1 p.m. to recognize the young 16 winners, share their ideas and award prizes. Students’ essays ranged in length from 50 to 900 words, depending on grade level. Younger children were encouraged to draw pictures.

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 work of the youth essay participants will be on display for residents attending the Vision Summit to view and read.