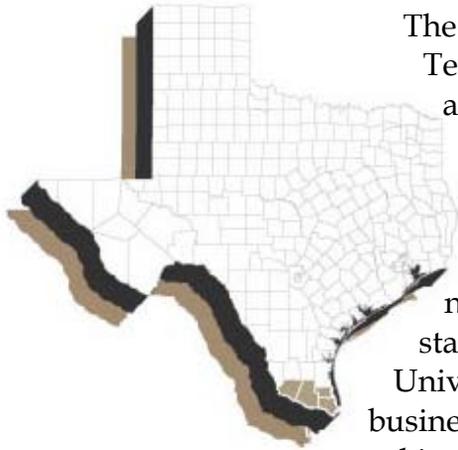


Rio Grande Valley



The Rio Grande Valley region, composed of 4 counties in South Texas, faces a variety of economic challenges. With Hidalgo and Cameron Counties being among the fastest growing in North America, the region must develop a workforce equipped with skills to compete in a global economy. Unemployment rates in the Rio Grande Valley have traditionally run significantly higher than the Texas and national averages. Through a collaborative effort including state and local governments, educational institutions like the University of Texas Pan American and South Texas College and business leaders like the Greater McAllen Alliance, the region is working to improve the economic climate for job creation and overall quality of life. In particular, the region has identified advanced manufacturing as the means toward future economic prosperity in the region.

The long term focus of the initiative is to establish a Rapid Response, Manufacturing-based infrastructure revitalization strategy to sustain the total number of high skill, high wage manufacturing jobs. Specifically, the region has identified three core strategies for achieving this goal.

The first strategy will strengthen the manufacturing and regional advanced technology bases through Rapid Response Manufacturing (RRM) and target RRM-based industries to sustain economic growth and prosperity. As part of this goal, the consortium will build the North American Research and Education World Premier Park on 280 acres within the region, as well as a Center for Rapid Response Manufacturing, in order to position the region as the “3rd Coast” and a major distribution hub for North America.

Secondly, the region will collaborate with local K-12 school systems and state universities to develop curriculum encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Through the financial support of the Gates Foundation in partnership with Region One Education Service Center and the Texas Education Agency, the region will also focus on transforming pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and expand to include higher education. This strategy places a greater emphasis on the attainment of higher education and empowers workers to gain the knowledge necessary to compete for jobs in today’s economy.

Finally, the region will develop a globally competitive manufacturing workforce through a Rapid Response Manufacturing-based strategic system that uses innovative curriculum to enhance the capabilities of the education system in order to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.



As a Second Generation WIRED region, the South Texas region seeks distinction as a major innovation hub of the Southwestern United States. Through an effective integrated workforce development plan and the commitment from state, local and business leaders in the region, this goal may soon become a reality.