

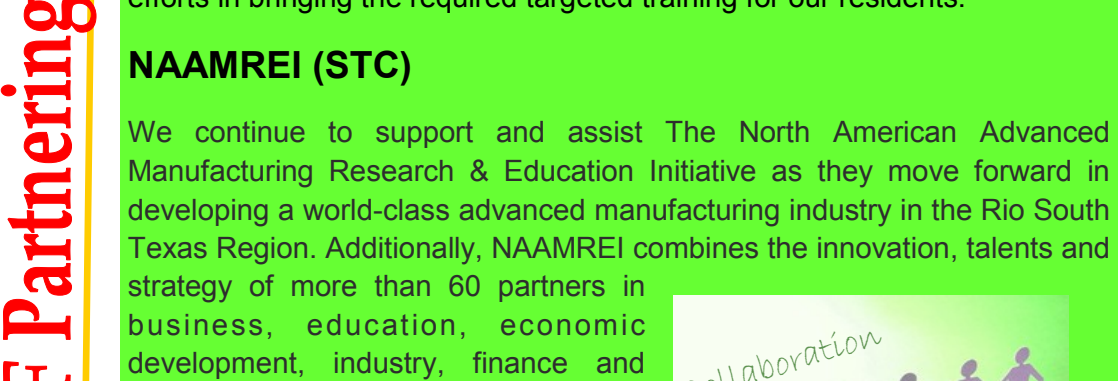
**President's Message -**  
The uncertainty and deep recession that plagued us much of the last 18 months appears to be on the brink of a moderate, but solid path to recovery. According to the American Bankers Association's Economic Advisory Committee, the private sector will add over 2 million new jobs this year, but still caution that unemployment and foreclosure rates will remain high. These concerns have become the platform for our business development and expansion strategies that we have initiated along with our local leaders. As a region we have seen commerce and consumers remain cautiously optimistic, attributing to steady sales tax revenues. Additionally, as a further indicator of the positive trend, our unemployment rate has finally experienced a reduction.

The course remains full of challenges, but together we continue to make progress. We would like to thank all of you that participated in the different focus groups and business seminars that we have offered. The insight we have received in each of these sessions has been invaluable to our future planning. In this edition we would like to introduce you to some of our partners and collaborators that labor diligently to ensure that our community achieves its goals.

*Rose Benavidez*

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**Our Partners**

**UTPA - Asset Mapping**  
We were part of the kickoff meeting for this project and continue to support and assist UTPA in their effort to develop a strength and weaknesses analysis of our region. The Mapping will provide a roadmap to assist us in strengthening our competitive position in the global economy. Recognizing our assets allows us to showcase them to industries inquiring about our area.

**Workforce Solutions—Employer Forum**  
A prepared workforce gives us an edge over the competition. The purpose of the forum was to recognize industry needs and concerns when selecting individuals for employment. The feedback will allow us to concentrate our efforts in bringing the required targeted training for our residents.

**NAAMREI (STC)**  
We continue to support and assist The North American Advanced Manufacturing Research & Education Initiative as they move forward in developing a world-class advanced manufacturing industry in the Rio South Texas Region. Additionally, NAAMREI combines the innovation, talents and strategy of more than 60 partners in business, education, economic development, industry, finance and government to offer manufactures across North America, and the globe, access to proprietary, world-class advanced manufacturing and rapid response manufacturing.

**Rapid Response Manufacturing (UTPA / STC)**  
The Rapid Response Manufacturing Center is critical to economic development for the Rio South Texas and all of North America. The initiative integrates technologies, management, and systems that significantly improve the speed to market of new and refreshed products, speed in response to customer needs, and demand for customized products at mass produced prices and quick delivery time. To win the battle of global competitiveness, the North American product design and manufacturing sector must enable rapid response to customer desires and needs.

**Rio South Texas (RSTEC)**  
2 Countries, 1 Region, Many Choices.  
Our promotional efforts have been reinforced through our partnership with RSTEC. The regional endeavor offers many choices for global business location and generous economic development incentives. The focus of the PR Campaign is to highlight our dynamic young labor force, great weather, low cost of living and plentiful recreational activities. The region is promoted as an ideal location for companies looking to expand or relocate.

**Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**  
We partnered to bring **The Many Hats of Business Ownership Seminar**, which focused on the many roles a business owner/manager must assume in order to have success. SBDC provides technical assistance through free, confidential counseling in various business areas such as business planning, financing, management, marketing, advertising, and record keeping.

**SCIF Partnering for Growth**

**SCIF and Social Media**

**Starr County Industrial Foundation connecting digitally**  
**We are now on Twitter and Facebook.**



"Traditional marketing and digital marketing are entwined, effectively social media capital is the new street credibility." **Jen Augustyn, Director of Strategic Planning and New Media for The Dealey Group at RECON**

The Starr County Industrial Foundation (SCIF) will use the social media sites as tools to reach parts of the world that would otherwise not know about our business friendly area. Rose Benavidez, President of the SCIF said, "We are complementing our marketing strategy. Providing those looking to come to our area a taste of the old frontier merged with technology." The SCIF continues to focus on being the nucleus for accurate and reliable information for and about the community.

**Statistics:**  
Facebook - More than 400 million active users, which include more than one million developers and entrepreneurs from more than 180 countries. (<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>)  
Twitter - 55 million tweets per day, Twitter search engine receives around 600 million search queries per day. (<http://blog.com/2010/02/measuring-tweets.html>)

**Webpage:**  
[www.starrcounty.org](http://www.starrcounty.org)

**Twitter:**  
[www.twitter.com/starrind](http://www.twitter.com/starrind)

**Facebook:**  
<http://www.facebook.com/StarrInd>

**OUR BORDER**

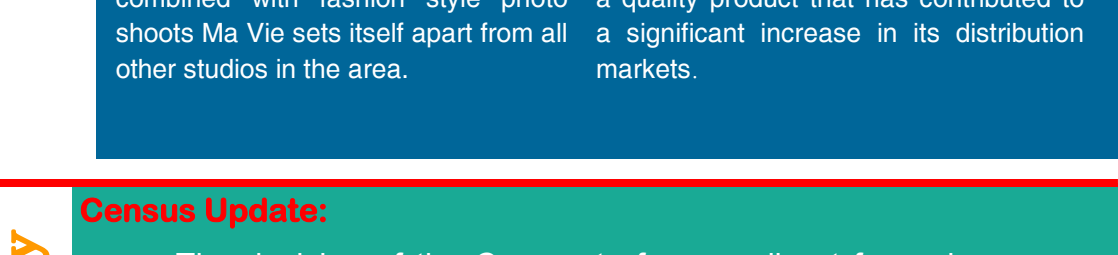
**MEXICO** Commentary by Rose Benavidez

Our ties to our Mexican sister cities remain strong amidst the turmoil they have endured, but contrary to media reports the Texas border region is not becoming a combat zone nor is it an overwhelmed haven for refugees fleeing well-publicized violent clashes in Mexico. Even as politicians say more federal troops are needed to fight rising "border violence", the reality indicates that instead Border Security has become the most overused, and least understood, concept in recent times.

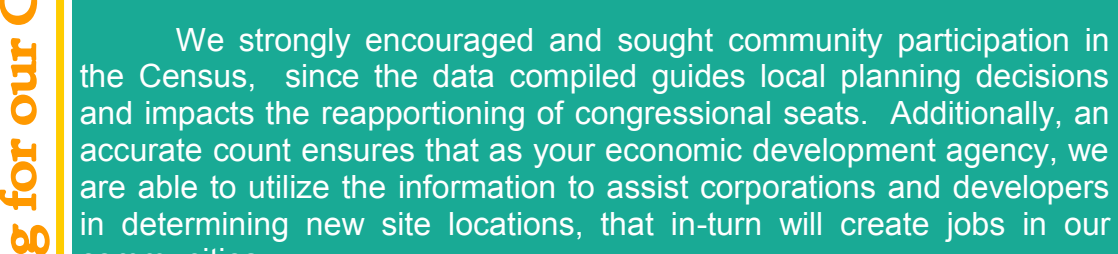
In an effort to help define and clarify our challenges, we have collaborated in preparing testimony and recommendations for State and Federal officials that are part of Committees overseeing Border and Homeland Security issues. Mexico remains one of the most cost effective places to do business and we will continue to support bi-national development and reinvestment that will yield benefits to each of our communities.

**SCIF Groundbreaking and Grand Openings**

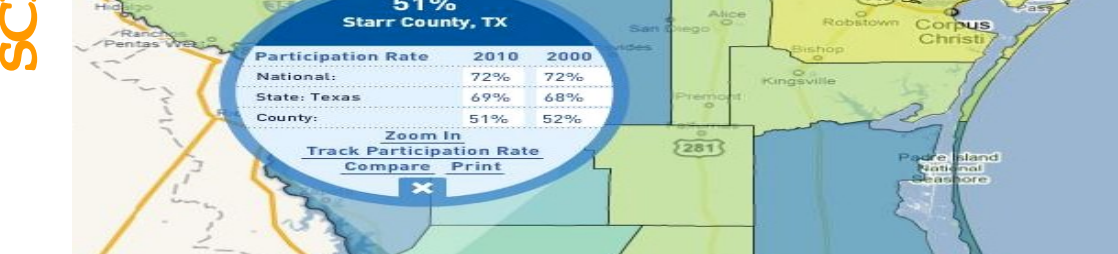
**Housing Authority of Starr County Groundbreaking**  
The Housing authority of Starr County (HASC) held a ground-breaking to celebrate the beginning of the 5.1 million construction project. The development marked the first time in over 40 years that program has constructed affordable housing in our area. The complex will include 34 one, two and three bedroom homes as well as an administration and maintenance building. Today construction continues and its inauguration is expected this December.



Congressman Cuellar together with County and City of Rio Grande officials joined us to celebrate this great feat.



**Manuel Benavidez Jr. Rural Technology Center**  
We assisted STC as it held a ribbon cutting and open house for the Manuel Benavidez Jr. Rural Technology Center. The 22,000 sq ft building provides internet-connected classrooms, computer aided drafting labs to support graphic art, web and network design. All curricula was developed to prepare our community to meet the technological demands of today. The Center is already in use and benefiting many residents.



Representative Ryan Guillen as well as RGC, Roma, County and STC leaders joined us for this great celebration

**In the Works**

- King's Buffett**  
4820 E. Hwy 83  
Rio Grande City, Texas
- Buffalo Wings and Rings**  
4830 E. Hwy 83  
Rio Grande City, Texas 78582

**Access to Capital**

- Ma Vie Studio**  
Through the City of Roma Revolving Loan Program Owner Ramiro Rodriguez received funds to assist him in establishing a high end photography studio. Creating unique lighting combined with fashion style photo shoots Ma Vie sets itself apart from all other studios in the area.
- Americas Bat Company**  
Through the City of Roma Revolving Loan Program owner Jaime Barrera received funds to assist in expanding his globally recognized company. America's Bat Company continues to manufacture a quality product that has contributed to a significant increase in its distribution markets.

**SCIF Working for our Community**

**Census Update:**  
The decision of the Census to forgo mail out forms in our area and focus on the update/enumerate system prompted us to search for ways to remedy the flawed idea. Working in partnership with Yo-Cuento, a public-private funded group, we developed a regional campaign. The campaign consisted of creating commercials on Spanish language TV, developing print material, organizing community festivals and most importantly, focused outreach efforts in "hard to count" areas.

We strongly encouraged and sought community participation in the Census, since the data compiled guides local planning decisions and impacts the reapportioning of congressional seats. Additionally, an accurate count ensures that as your economic development agency, we are able to utilize the information to assist corporations and developers in determining new site locations, that in-turn will create jobs in our communities.

There is still work to do, **please help us** in making sure everyone is counted. Visit the US Census website for more details.



Join Roma for their 4th of July Celebration [www.labordehouse.com](http://www.labordehouse.com)

**City of Roma and Roma Chamber of Commerce Invites you to our 2010 4th of July Festival**

**La Borde House**  
A gracious tradition...reborn

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**SCIF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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- Vice-Chair: Richard Gutierrez, Gutierrez Ranch
- Secretary: Larry Gonzalez, First National Bank
- Treasurer: Noel Benavides, J C Ramirez Store
- Joe Escamilla, Border Pacific Railroad Co.
- Gustavo Valadez, KQBO
- Xavier Perez, Hinojosa and Perez
- Eloy Vera, Starr County Judge
- Abel Gonzalez, Starr County Commissioner
- Ruben Villarreal, Mayor, City of Rio Grande City
- Rogelio Ybarra, Mayor, City of Roma
- Brenda Villarreal, Mayor, City of La Grulla
- Roberto Salinas, President Roma EDC



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