

Texas Health and Human Services

*Evaluation of the
Health and Human Services Commission's*

***Colonias Initiative in
Del Rio and Eagle Pass***

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Executive Summary

Texas colonias are low-income rural communities, and large numbers are located on or near the Mexican border. Many lack amenities such as running water, sewers, electricity, and paved streets. The population in colonias is predominantly Hispanic, young, and unskilled. Many are farm or migrant workers.

The Health and Human Services Commission's Colonias Initiative works to provide colonia residents access to health and social services available in the community. The effort involves all the health and human service agencies as well as numerous local partners. The Colonias Initiative began in 2000 in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and expanded in 2002 to El Paso and Laredo. The initiative expanded to Del Rio and Eagle Pass in 2003. This evaluation describes the Del Rio and Eagle Pass initiative and provides a set of recommendations for enhancement.

Del Rio is in Val Verde County, and Eagle Pass is in Maverick County. Both counties are adjacent to the Mexico border and are large, sparsely populated, and distant from major urban centers. They are relatively poor counties offering few resources compared to large urban counties. Both counties contain a large number of colonias.

The Colonias Initiative in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, El Paso, and Laredo all use a model based on interagency workgroups, community centers funded by Texas A&M University, and promotores—lay educators who live in the colonias and work at the centers to provide outreach and information and referral to the communities. The Del Rio and Eagle Pass version has effective local workgroups and an active coordinator. However, it lacks a system of Texas A&M community centers and promotores. As a result, the initiative here faces unique challenges. It receives support from local governments, school districts, faith-based communities, and other social service organizations, but its effectiveness is limited.

Recommendations for enhancing the Del Rio and Eagle Pass Colonias Initiative include maintaining the cooperative working arrangements, enhancing the contributions of the faith-based community, identifying private sector partners, improving access to medical care, improving colonia children's public school graduation rates and college attendance, and establishing local food banks. The local workgroups are encouraged to focus their efforts on key issues, and it is recommended that each city have its own regional coordinator.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation was conducted by staff in the Strategic Decision Support division of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The evaluation team reviewed Colonias Initiative documents as well as documents and Internet sites concerning Texas colonias and the Texas-Mexico border.

Interviews were held with the HHSC Director of the Office of Border Affairs, who has administrative responsibility for the initiative's activities. Interviews also took place with the HHSC regional coordinator of the Del Rio and Eagle Pass initiative. The evaluation team also traveled to Del Rio and Eagle Pass, toured colonias involved in the initiative, met with colonia representatives, staff, and partners in the colonias, and met with the local Del Rio and Eagle Pass HHS workgroups.

Texas Colonias

Spanish-English dictionaries translate the word "colonia" to mean "colony," "residential area," or "neighborhood"—relatively neutral meanings. However, along the Texas-Mexico border, the word means much more. Here, it refers to low-income rural communities, usually without running water, sewers, electricity, or paved streets. Over 1,400 colonias along the Texas-Mexico border are home to more than 400,000 individuals.¹

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development described colonias residents as:

"... predominantly Mexican-American, young, and unskilled. The residents are usually farm workers and migrants. These rural communities are usually less than 10,000 in population with the majority of the population being individuals and families of low and very low income. Generally the level of education of colonia residents is low and illiteracy is high. The primary language is Spanish, which often impedes access to existing

¹ Federal Reserve Bank of Texas, "Texas Colonias: A Thumbnail Sketch of the Conditions, Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities." Available at <http://www.dallasfed.org/htm/pubs/pdfs/ca/colonias.pdf>. (Accessed April 17, 2003)

programs and interpretation and understanding of policies, procedures, and legal documents."²

Health care in the colonias, and along the border area generally, is below standard. For example, if the U.S. territory within 100 kilometers of the Mexican border (including California, Arizona, and New Mexico as well as Texas) were considered to be a state, it would include 11 million residents. This state's population would have:

- The lowest rank in the nation in access to health care;
- The nation's second highest rank in deaths due to hepatitis;
- The nation's third highest rank in deaths related to diabetes; and
- A tuberculosis rate that is six times greater than the national rate.

In general, colonias are neighborhoods or subdivisions that began and continue to exist at very low levels of development, many of them with conditions that resemble a third world country.³

There is however, great variability among colonias. No two are identical, and there is a broad range of development. Many colonias are indeed very much "third world" in character, but others are at higher levels of development. Colonias that are near urban areas tend to be relatively well developed.

HHSC Colonias Initiative

The purpose of the HHSC Colonias Initiative is to improve colonia residents' ability to access health and human services that are available in their communities.

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Available at <http://www.hud.gov/groups/frmwkcoln/texcol.cfm>. (Accessed April 17, 2003)

³ Ariel Cisneros. "The Border Economy." Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Available at <http://www.dallasfed.org/htm/pubs/border/cisneros.htm>. (Accessed May 1, 2003)

HHSC works closely with the four other HHS system agencies—the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Department of State Health Services. Additional key partners include the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Education Agency, and the Center for Housing and Urban Development at Texas A&M University.

A notable feature of the initiative is its work with promotores. Promotores are colonia residents who are trained on the services and eligibility requirements of HHS agencies and who deliver outreach and advocacy activities to other colonia residents. Since they are colonia residents themselves, promotores provide a culturally sensitive approach intended to produce greater resident participation in the programs offered. Grants administered by Texas A&M established the promotor program that the Colonias Initiative works with, and the HHS agencies help train and work with promotores.

The Texas Colonias Initiative began operations in 2000 in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and expanded in 2002 to El Paso and Laredo.⁴ The initiative expanded to Del Rio and Eagle Pass in 2003.

Val Verde and Maverick Counties

Geography

Del Rio (population 35,400) is located in Val Verde County, and Eagle Pass (population 24,667) is located in Maverick County.⁵ Both counties are located in the southwest region of the state

⁴ An earlier HHSC evaluation described the initiative's operations in these three locations. See "Evaluation of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Colonias Initiative," August 2003. Available at http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/hhsc_projects/colonias/082003_HHSC_Eval.pdf. (Accessed October 3, 2005)

along the Rio Grande River. They are not contiguous; they are separated, on the connecting highway, by a stretch of approximately 14 miles of Kinney County.

Del Rio is the county seat of Val Verde County, and it is 154 miles west of San Antonio. Eagle Pass is the county seat of Maverick County, and it is 143 miles from San Antonio. Del Rio is 55 miles north of Eagle Pass, along the Rio Grande River.

Del Rio and Eagle Pass both are border towns with sister cities in Mexico. Ciudad Acuña is the sister city to Del Rio, and Piedras Negras is paired with Eagle Pass.

Val Verde is more than twice as large as Maverick—3,170 square miles, compared to 1,280 square miles. By comparison, the central Texas county containing the state capital, Travis, is smaller than either Val Verde or Maverick, containing only 989 square miles. Bexar County, the home of San Antonio, is similar in size to Maverick, containing 1,247 square miles.

In Val Verde County, Del Rio is the only incorporated town. As Table 1 shows, there are few other towns of any significant size. Similarly, Eagle Pass is the only incorporated town in Maverick County, and the other towns in the county are relatively small (see Table 2).

Colonias Count

The Texas Water Development Board has identified a total of 12 colonias in Val Verde County, and these have an estimated combined population of about 6,000. In Maverick County, the Texas Water Development Board has identified 44 colonias, with an estimated combined population of about 15,000. Maps 1 and 2 show the colonias for both Maverick County and Val Verde County.⁶

⁵ Texas State Data Center 2004 Population Estimates. Estimates of the Total Populations of Counties and Places in Texas for July 1, 2003 and January 1, 2004. Available at http://txsdc.utsa.edu/tpepp/2003_txpopest_place.php. (Accessed October 17, 2005)

⁶ These maps were developed by the Texas Water Development Board and can be found at <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/COLONIAS/Nov2001Maps/2001MapIndex.htm>. (Accessed October 14, 2005)

Population Characteristics

The combined population in Val Verde and Maverick Counties is small, less than one percent of the Texas population. But both counties have grown over recent years. Between 2000 and 2004, both counties experienced a six percent growth in population.

Like other counties along the Texas-Mexico border, the population of Val Verde and Maverick is predominantly Hispanic and young. Hispanics comprise 86 percent of the counties' combined population. Additionally, the population 18 or younger accounts for over one third of the combined population (35%). Table 3 shows the population in each county by race/ethnicity, and Table 4 shows the population in each county by selected age groups.

Population Density

Val Verde County's population density is quite low, only 14.1 persons per square mile. Maverick's is higher, 36.9 persons per square mile. However, both of these are far lower than the urban counties of Travis (821.1 persons per square mile) and Bexar (1,117.2 persons per square mile). The density for Maverick is only 3 percent of the similarly-sized Bexar.

Income and Poverty

In general, the state's poorest counties, both rural and metro, are located primarily along the Texas-Mexico border. Val Verde and Maverick Counties are part of this pattern. The median household income for Texas was \$40,063 in 2002, but the median income for both Val Verde and Maverick Counties was well below the state median (\$28,989 and \$22,312, respectively).⁷

Poverty rates in these two counties exceed both the state and national rates. In 2002, the poverty rate for the nation was 12.1 percent compared to 15.4 percent for Texas.⁸ But the

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. Released December 2004. Available online: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html>. (Accessed: September 9, 2005)

⁸ Ibid.

poverty rates in Val Verde and Maverick were almost twice the national rate. Val Verde had a poverty rate of 22.2 percent, and Maverick had a rate of 30.1 percent.⁹ Additionally, 22 percent of children age 17 and younger in both Maverick and Val Verde Counties were estimated to be living in poverty.¹⁰

Table 5 shows the percent of the population living in poverty in Texas and both Val Verde and Maverick Counties. Table 6 shows similar information for the child population (those who are 17 years of age or younger).

Unemployment

Like other counties along the Texas-Mexico border, there is a high rate of unemployment in Val Verde and Maverick Counties. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, in calendar year 2004, the unemployment rate for the state was 6.1 percent, and the unemployment rate for both counties was higher (7.4 percent for Val Verde and 15.2 percent for Maverick). Table 7 shows the unemployment rates for the state and each of the counties.

Enrollment in Public Services

Due to the high poverty and low incomes along the Texas-Mexico border, many of the counties have large numbers of people eligible for public service programs such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Food Stamps.¹¹

Table 8 shows the percent of the total population who are enrolled in Medicaid, TANF, and Food Stamps. Table 9 shows the percent of the population age 0-18 that are enrolled in CHIP,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Medicaid provides medical coverage to eligible needy persons. CHIP is designed for families who earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford to buy private insurance. TANF provides financial assistance to needy dependent children and the parents or relatives with whom they are living. TANF households also receive Medicaid benefits. The Food Stamp program enables low-income families to buy food in authorized retail food stores.

Medicaid, TANF, and Food Stamps. It is evident that a high percentage of the population in both Val Verde and Maverick Counties rely on public service programs for assistance.

Infrastructure

As indicated previously, many colonias on the Texas-Mexico border have poorly developed infrastructure. There are many examples of Texas colonias that lack paved roads, electric service, water, wastewater disposal, and trash pickup.

However, the Val Verde and Maverick colonias that are targeted by the Colonias Initiative do have many or all of these features. The sites toured by evaluators had electric service, water, sewage and water disposal, and most had one or more paved roads. Other colonias in the counties, however, are not as fortunate.

This pattern of fairly sound infrastructure matches the colonias targeted by HHSC in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, and El Paso. In the evaluation of these sites completed in 2003, HHSC evaluators concluded that much of the infrastructure improvements have occurred in the past ten years, largely as a result of efforts of state agencies acting in response to state legislation.

Colonias Initiative in Del Rio and Eagle Pass

The Colonias Initiative began in Del Rio and Eagle Pass in December 2003. The HHSC staffing consists of a single regional coordinator, who resides in Eagle Pass. This individual maintains offices in both Del Rio and Eagle Pass, but Eagle Pass is her primary location. As needed, once every week on the average, she commutes the 55 miles between Eagle Pass and Del Rio to attend local workgroup meetings and to participate in other activities.

Colonias

In both sites, the Colonias Initiative does most of its work in a limited number of colonias (“targeted” colonias), but also reaches out to all the colonias in the area.

In Del Rio (Val Verde County), the initiative targets the Cienegas Terrace colonia. It also works in the colonias of Chaparral Hills, Val Verde Park Estates, Escondido Estates, and Los Campos.

In Eagle Pass (Maverick County), the initiative targets colonias around the Texas A&M Seco Mines Community Center (including Quemado, Normandy, Airport Addition, Radar Base, Elm Creek 1 & 2, South Elm Creek, Deer Run, Deer Run 1-5, Sauz Creek, and Hopedale). They also work closely with all colonias served by two additional colonia centers, Maverick County Loma Bonita Self Help Center and Community Action Social Service Agency (CASSE)/La Central. Loma Bonita Self Help serves the following colonias: Las Quintas Fronteras, Loma Bonita, Cedar Ridge I & II, Nellis Lands, Morales Circle, Las Hacienditas, Lago Vista, Morales, Hector Rodriguez, Big River Park, Las Brisas, Las Carretas, Los Jardines Verdes, Wilson and Bargo, Green Acres, Paisano Heights, Eagle Heights, and Zamora Lands Rockaway Country. La Central/CASSE serves: Eagle Heights, Chula Vista, Pueblo Nuevo, Loma Linda, Rosita Valley, Riverside Acres, Florentine Ramos, Victoriano Hernandez, and Kickapoo Indian Village.

Local Workgroups

Each city has local Colonias Initiative workgroups that meet regularly to share information and plan activities for residents living in targeted and non-targeted colonias. The Del Rio and Eagle Pass workgroups both include representatives from San Antonio and Laredo. San Antonio is located more than 150 miles from either Del Rio or Eagle Pass, and Laredo is located more than 120 miles from either city. This distance makes regular meeting attendance, event participation, and regular outreach efforts challenging.

The members of the local workgroup are listed in Table 10. They represent a wide spectrum of social and health services group in the two areas. In addition, the workgroup also includes representatives of the state health and human service agencies.

Regional Coordinator Tasks

The regional coordinator fulfills a large number of roles. These include:

- Works with HHS agency representatives and community partners to build consensus in achieving common goals and to offer assistance with issues related to border health, education, and workforce.
- Develops opportunities for HHS and partners to present information regarding available services to the Texas A&M VISTA volunteer in Eagle Pass, parental involvement specialists in the Del Rio school district, community service staff, advocates, recruiters in the Eagle Pass school district, migrant parent advocates at the Texas Migrant Council, spiritual leaders, and others.
- Develops direct service opportunities, including health fairs and outreach activities.
- Coordinates disease management training opportunities for social service and health professionals in the region; connects with the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio.
- Works to increase medical services in the colonias (hearing, vision, dental, and others).
- Coordinates the HHSC Office of Eligibility Services' Colonias Itinerant Worker Project in Eagle Pass and Del Rio, including securing shared space and setting up schedules.
- Communicates information regarding training, employment, funding, services, and resources through an Internet distribution list.
- Produces quarterly newsletter highlighting HHS and partners.
- Serves as active board member on issue committees (Eagle Pass school district Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, Texas Migrant Council Health Advisory Board, and health organizations in Eagle Pass, Piedras Negras, and the Kickapoo Indian tribe).

- Facilitates monthly HHSC Colonias Initiative workgroup meetings which alternate between Del Rio and Eagle Pass.

Promotores

The Spanish term *promotores* is used to describe lay community educators.¹² Promotores are predominantly women and are hired from within communities to provide culturally consistent outreach and to communicate the needs of residents to service providers.¹³ Promotores have been trained to introduce state government services (such as education, medical, and social services) to colonia residents that may otherwise be outside of their reach.¹⁴ Promotor-based education programs allow colonia residents to become involved with activities and programs beyond the colonia, thereby strengthening the social and economic infrastructure of their own communities.¹⁵

During the 1999 legislative session, Texas became the first state in the nation to recognize the work of promotores and their contributions to the health and wellbeing of Texans. According to the definition set by legislators in HB 1864, 76th Legislative Session, a "Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker is a person who, with or without compensation: provides cultural mediation between communities and health and human service systems; informal counseling and social support; and culturally and linguistically appropriate health education; advocates for individual and community health needs; assures people get the health services they need; builds individual and community capacity; or provides referral and follow-up services."¹⁶

¹² Irma N. Ramos, Marlynn May, and Kenneth S. Ramos, "Environmental Health Training of Promotoras in Colonias Along the Texas Mexico Border," *American Journal of Public Health* 91, no. 4, 568-570 (2001).

¹³ Center for Housing and Urban Development, Texas A&M University, "Promotoras - Breaking Barriers of Isolation", *Border Community Development News*, Summer 1998. Available at <http://chud.tamu.edu/files/pradip-article.html>.

¹⁴ Ramos, May, and Ramos, 468-570.

¹⁵ Ramos, May, and Ramos, 468-570.

¹⁶ Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 146, Rule §146.1(10).

Promotores in the Colonias Initiative in El Paso, the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and Laredo are employed by local community centers and are funded by Texas A&M University. The role of these individuals is to provide services and information to community residents at the centers and in the residents' homes. HHS system agencies and partners provide training for the promotores so they are familiar with the available services.

While other regions participating in the Colonias Initiative rely heavily on the Texas A&M promotores to assist with outreach, both Del Rio and Eagle Pass have only a single promotor to conduct outreach in the community. Consequently, Del Rio and Eagle Pass have relied on others to promote health and assist with community outreach and service provision. These include nutrition education workers, school district staff such as Community Service Advocate Recruiters and Parental Involvement Specialists, Migrant Parental Advocates, and, in Eagle Pass, members of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas and Oklahoma.

Colonia Community Centers

Within the region, there is only one Texas A&M colonia community center, located in the Seco Mines Colonia in Eagle Pass. This is the location of the single promotor. Because of this lack of Texas A&M community centers and promotores, Eagle Pass partnered with two non-A&M colonia centers, and Del Rio partnered with a faith-based organization that allows their facility to be used for community activities.

St. Joseph's Church in Del Rio allows Colonias Initiative partner agencies to use their space in the heart of the targeted colonia on limited days to conduct outreach to residents. However, since the space is provided at no cost, they cannot provide air conditioning due to already-high utility bills. In order to assist the residents, the Val Verde County Commissioner's Court, in partnership with St. Joseph's Church and HHSC, pays for the utility bills on days outreach is conducted.

Additionally, the Colonias Initiative community centers in other Texas locations often serve as the location within the community for food distribution. However, in Eagle Pass, the Eagle Pass colonia centers and county offices distribute food, while Del Rio relies on the help of the Val Verde County Self Help Center staff to assist with food distribution.

Challenges

Isolation

Colonias targeted for HHS services in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, and El Paso tend to be located in rural areas and are somewhat isolated, but many of these colonias are close to a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), including El Paso, Brownsville-Harlingen, McAllen-Edinburg, and Laredo.

However, neither Del Rio nor Eagle Pass is an MSA, and there is no MSA nearby. The closest MSAs are Laredo and San Antonio. As a result, many services and resources are largely unavailable. For example, colonias in both cities rely on the food bank in Laredo, which is more than 120 miles away from Eagle Pass and about 180 miles from Del Rio¹⁷.

Additionally, services such as mental health are limited in this region, so clients must travel outside city limits for assistance. Other programs such as dental clinics are non-existent for colonias residents. School districts provide after-school tutoring in some schools, but there are no school enrichment education programs specifically for colonia students. Moreover, while the Colonia Initiative has distributed 50 surplus computers and printers to Eagle Pass colonia centers, there is still a need for additional computers with Internet access. Long commutes to and from school and lack of computers with Internet access near children's homes make it difficult for colonia children to complete school assignments requiring the use of computers.

Centers and Promotores

¹⁷ Moreover, if weather conditions are not favorable or other problems arise, residents in the colonias may wait longer to get food. Also, because food distribution dates are not scheduled regularly, workgroup members are unable to coordinate other activities with food distribution days.

Since there is limited participation from Texas A&M in Del Rio and Eagle Pass, there are significant challenges for the colonia workgroup members.

At the other three initiative sites, there is a Texas A&M community center at every targeted colonia. There are four in Laredo, four in El Paso¹⁸, and seven in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. These centers all employ a number of promotores. These promotores regularly go into their communities to perform outreach and provide information and referrals, and the HHS agencies train the promotores periodically at the centers. There are other established colonia community centers dedicated to the Colonias Initiative which are not supported by Texas A&M. These community centers are located in both targeted and non-targeted colonias. There are two in Laredo, one in El Paso, and one in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The community centers are the site for providing many services, including HHSC eligibility determination (for Food Stamps, Medicaid, and CHIP), vision and hearing screens, health fairs, employment training and job search, health services, food bank distribution, free public water sources, and others. At many community centers, promotores use vans provided by the centers to provide transportation for clients to go to in the nearby town to get other needed services. There is also a WIC clinic associated with nearly every center.

In Del Rio and Eagle Pass, the initiative focuses on a number of colonias. However, only Eagle Pass has a Texas A&M community center (Seco Mines Community Center). This center has one paid promotor with limited assistance to accomplish all of the services listed above. In Del Rio, these services are not readily available to colonia residents or are provided in other ways.

For example, in Del Rio, there is a close relationship with faith-based organizations, and HHSC eligibility determination is done at the St. Joseph's Church in Del Rio. In addition, in order to promote activities and inform residents about their availability, Spanish radio stations in Del Rio broadcast public service announcements reaching many residents in Del Rio and Mexico. Additionally, the Texas Workforce Commission has recently started printing a comprehensive weekly list of jobs available in Val Verde, Maverick, and surrounding counties. The Colonias

¹⁸ All four centers in El Paso were constructed through funding provided by Texas A&M; however, two of the four were handed over to the county, and are now under management by two entities not affiliated with A&M.

Initiative distributes this to each colonia center director and social service organizations in the colonias to share with residents.¹⁹

While these novel approaches appear to be reasonably effective, the Del Rio and Eagle Pass program faces significant handicaps due to the lack of a community center in Del Rio and limited Texas A&M promotores. The Colonia Initiative regional coordinator and workgroup representatives often must work double duty. In addition to attending a monthly meeting, these individuals also conduct outreach, assist with special events, and provide services at the colonia centers. Furthermore, due to lack of automation in the field, eligibility workers must go into the field to the colonia site, collect resident information manually, and then bring it back to the office to enter the information in their automated systems.

Dropout Prevention

The other Colonias Initiative sites work with school districts to help prevent colonias children from dropping out of school. Much of this is done in coordination with the Communities In Schools (CIS) program, a nationally recognized dropout prevention program that works through counselors placed in the public schools. Unfortunately, although Del Rio and Eagle Pass have strong, supportive partners in its local school districts who make staff and space available, neither city has a CIS program.

There is also a high teen pregnancy rate in Del Rio and Eagle Pass, which leads frequently to dropping out. Workgroup members stated that the community may further reinforce teen pregnancy through the “respect” often given to these teen moms. As a result, Del Rio has established a community coalition spearheaded by members of the Colonia Initiative to launch teen pregnancy prevention efforts.

Recommendations

¹⁹ Although residents cannot apply for jobs unless they are registered with the Texas Workforce Commission, it provides them an opportunity to view the types of jobs available.

The HHSC evaluation team developed the following set of recommendations for the Colonias Initiative in Del Rio and Eagle Pass.

1. Maintain Existing Approach to Cooperative Working Arrangements

The Colonias Initiative model that has been developed in other locations in the state involves engaging all the HHS agencies as well as other key partners. This approach is working well in the Del Rio and Eagle Pass sites, and it should be continued. In particular, the regular meetings of the local workgroups in both communities are effective and should be continued.

2. Enhance Collaboration with Faith-Based Community

In Del Rio and Eagle Pass, only a single targeted colonia has a community center. Furthermore, this center has only one promotor who conducts outreach in the community. There are no other promotores associated with the Colonias Initiative in either city.

To deal with this issue, the Colonias Initiative regional coordinator has worked with faith-based partners in Del Rio to identify church-owned locations that are used in lieu of the community centers. The coordinator has also nurtured partnerships with organizations that work with colonia residents to promote health and education (for example, local school districts, migrant outreach organizations, and clinics).

These approaches have been effective and should be continued and expanded. In addition, it is recommended that the faith-based community be approached to help fulfill the promotor function as well. Church volunteers may be enlisted to serve in this important way.

3. Work with Communities to Identify Private Sector Partners

In the communities of Del Rio and Eagle Pass, business partners should be identified who are willing to help expand the resources available for local colonia activities. These private sector partners may, for example, be able to:

- Fund the positions of outreach workers, to take the place of promotor positions;
- Help create mentoring programs, in which businesses work with children who live in colonias; and
- Provide job training and employment services to colonias residents.

4. Develop Programs to Provide Better Access to Medical Care

In Colonias Initiative sites across Texas, there are several approaches to help colonia residents obtain needed medical care. For example, many community centers in the colonias have WIC clinics attached to them, and many arrange for health care personnel to provide services at the community centers. Also, they may provide transportation using vans stationed at the centers, and they also may help residents access public transportation. They also may bring medical and dental vans into the colonias.

In Del Rio and Eagle Pass, public transportation is scarce, and the use of vans driven by the Texas A&M promotor to transport residents to medical appointments is limited. In Eagle Pass, CASSE/La Central has a clinic attached to it with itinerant medical services being provided.

Since medical services are vital to the colonia populations, it is strongly recommended that the Colonias Initiative explore ways to expand on existing services and develop effective programs to improve medical access.

5. Collaborate with Public Schools to Improve Colonia Children's Graduation Rates

In order for colonia children to become productive citizens who live and raise their own families in satisfactory living arrangements, proper education is essential. Colonia children attend public schools, but relatively few graduate from high school. Many leave school by the eighth grade or earlier for various reasons, including to get a job to help their parents.

The Del Rio and Eagle Pass Colonias Initiative should work with their school district partners to promote programs that reduce the dropout rates of colonias children. Possible approaches include the following.

- **Work with the communities to establish effective Communities In Schools programs in the public schools.** These nationally-recognized programs help children of all ages stay in school, both through special staff and counselors in the schools and also through efforts to reduce the rate of teen pregnancies.
- **Work with schools and school districts to determine dropout rates for children who live in colonias.** Rates should be monitored periodically to measure the progress of programs in reducing dropout rates.
- **Work with schools to identify teachers who can inspire and support students to finish public school and consider higher education.** Develop approaches to bring children from colonias into contact with these teachers.
- **Work with communities to identify prominent figures to act as role models for colonia children.** Role models should inspire youths, strengthen their values, and motivate them to live up to their full potential despite barriers.
- **Develop programs to support colonia children.** Many colonia children are singled out by peers at school because of where they live, the clothing they wear, and lack of proper hygiene. To help these colonia children succeed in school, despite being at odds with other students, HHS partners and the school districts should work to minimize the inadequacies many colonia children feel while attending school. Possible approaches include linking colonia children with other students who can act as "pals," developing peer support groups, and providing clothing pantries for the colonia children to use.
- **Encourage schools to adopt or emphasize school-to-work programs.** School-to-work programs can provide high schoolers with job skills and introduce them to the work culture. They should be fostered in Del Rio and Eagle Pass, and colonia children should be introduced to them.

- **Use successful residents to inspire others.** HHS partners should work with their communities to identify former colonia residents who have left the colonia and had success in life. These individuals should be invited to return to their home colonias to convey the message to children that success is in fact possible. Local media should be encouraged to provide coverage of events involving these individuals.

6. Encourage College Attendance

Few colonia children attend college. As in any area of the state, not every child in the colonias would benefit from college attendance, but certainly many would. It is important for Colonias Initiative partners to establish programs that help remove college barriers. The partners in each region should develop and implement a plan to move in this direction. The programs could include (but are not limited to) working with public middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities,²⁰ and local businesses to:

- Identify college students and faculty to act as mentors for colonias children;
- Tailor scholarship programs and work-study programs for colonias students who attend their local college campuses;
- Help colonias residents apply for other sources of state and federal financial aid;
- Provide financial grants for children to use to obtain suitable clothing and school supplies; and
- Provide tutoring and other programs to help students succeed in middle and high school.

7. Work with Communities to Establish Local Food Banks

²⁰ Two colleges—Southwest Texas Junior College and Rio Grande College of Sul Ross State University—have campuses in both Del Rio and Eagle Pass.

Neither Del Rio nor Eagle Pass has a food bank, and the food bank in Laredo is used to provide this service. Volunteers travel from Del Rio and Eagle Pass to Laredo and use trucks to haul food back. This system works, but it is difficult and quite time and labor intensive.

It is strongly recommended that the local colonias workgroups work with their communities to establish local food banks in Del Rio and in Eagle Pass.

8. Refine Workgroup Structure and Function

The local workgroups should consider forming subcommittees that work on specific issues. Each year, for example, the groups could select two or three key issues and appoint a lead person and other members to work to resolve them. Among the issues that could be adopted are the ones just mentioned. Specifically:

- Enhance collaboration with faith-based community;
- Work with communities to identify private sector partners;
- Develop programs to provide better access to medical care;
- Collaborate with public schools to improve colonia children's graduation rates;
- Encourage college attendance; and
- Work with communities to establish local food banks.

9. One Regional Coordinator for Del Rio and Another for Eagle Pass

As indicated earlier, Del Rio and Eagle Pass face unique challenges because of their isolation and lack of resources. In addition, the current HHSC staffing pattern poses a further challenge because it calls for the regional coordinator to split time between two cities. This split limits the coordinator's effectiveness in each city.

It is recommended that HHSC strongly consider adding another regional coordinator position so both communities can benefit from the full-time effort of an HHSC staff coordinator.

Table 1. Communities in Val Verde County^{1,2}

Town	Population
*DEL RIO	35,400
*Cienegas Terrace	3,008
*Laughlin Air Force Base	2,280
*Val Verde Park	2,033
^Comstock	375
*Lake View	169
*Box Canyon-Amistad	75
^Langtry	30
^Loma Alta	30
^Pumpville	21
^Pandale	20

Table 2. Communities in Maverick County^{1,2}

Town	Population
*EAGLE PASS	24,667
*Eidson Road	9,678
*Rosita North	3,557
*Rosita South	2,669
*Las Quintas Fronterizas	2,092
*Elm Creek	2,013
^Seco Mines	692
*El Indio	278
*Quemado	244
*Radar Base	165
^Normandy	114
^Maverick	35

¹ Communities in all capital letters are incorporated.

² Two sources of data were used:

*Texas State Data Center. Estimates of the Total Populations of Counties & Places in Texas for July 1, 2003 and January 1, 2004. Available at http://txsdc.utsa.edu/tpepp/2003_txpopest_place.php. (Accessed October 17, 2005) and

^Texas Almanac. Available at www.texasalmanac.com. (Accessed October 4, 2005)

Table 3. Percent of Population in Val Verde and Maverick Counties and Texas, Shown Separately by Race/Ethnicity, 2004³

Location	Race/Ethnicity			
	Anglo	Black	Hispanic	Other
Texas	50%	11%	35%	4%
Maverick	3%	<1%	95%	1%
Val Verde	21%	1%	76%	7%

Table 4. Percent of Population in Val Verde and Maverick Counties and Texas, Shown Separately by Age Group, 2004³

Location	Age Group		
	18 and younger	19 – 59 years	60 and older
Texas	29%	58%	14%
Maverick	38%	49%	13%
Val Verde	33%	51%	16%

Table 5. Percent of Total Population Living in Poverty in Val Verde and Maverick Counties and Texas, 2002⁴

Location	Pct. Living in Poverty
Texas	15%
Maverick	30%
Val Verde	22%

³ Texas State Data Center at University of Texas at San Antonio. Population Migration Growth Scenario 2000-2002. Version 6/04.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. Released December 2004. Available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html>. (Accessed September 9, 2005)

Table 6. Percent of Child Population (17 Years of Age or Younger) Living in Poverty in Val Verde and Maverick Counties and Texas, 2002⁴

Location	Pct. Living in Poverty
Texas	21%
Maverick	43%
Val Verde	31%

Table 7. Unemployment Rates in Val Verde and Maverick Counties and Texas, 2004⁵

Location	Unemployment Rate
Texas	6.1
Maverick	15.2
Val Verde	7.4

Table 8. Percent of Total Population Enrolled in Public Service Programs (CHIP, Medicaid, TANF, and Food Stamps) as of September 2005 in Val Verde and Maverick Counties and Texas⁶

Location	Public Service Program		
	Medicaid	TANF	Food Stamps
Texas	12%	1%	11%
Maverick	28%	2%	29%
Val Verde	21%	1%	20%

⁵ Texas Workforce Commission. Texas Labor Market Information TRACER. Available at <http://www.tracer2.com/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=142>. (Accessed October 21, 2005)

⁶ Medicaid data from Texas Medicaid Program, Monthly Eligibles (Med-ID) file for September 2005 prepared by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Demographics Team, Strategic Decision Support. TANF data from MIS (TP687500) file for September 2005 prepared by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Texas Works Reporting Team, Strategic Decision Support. Food Stamp data from RF03 Food Stamp Report for August 2005 prepared by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Texas Works Reporting Team, Strategic Decision Support.

Table 9. Percent of Population 18 or Younger Enrolled in Public Service Programs (CHIP, Medicaid, TANF, and Food Stamps)⁷

Location	Public Service Program			
	CHIP	Medicaid	TANF	Food Stamps
Texas	5%	27%	2%	21%
Maverick	7%	47%	4%	41%
Val Verde	4%	39%	2%	32%

Table 9. Local Workgroup Members⁸

AGENCY	TYPE OF SERVICE	CITY
Amistad Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center	Outreach, domestic violence issues	Del Rio
Border Patrol Chaplin Del Rio Sector	Support services, community outreach	Del Rio
Del Rio Housing Authority	Housing	Del Rio
San Felipe Del Rio Consolidated Independent School District	Education	Del Rio
St. Joseph's Catholic Church –Centro Catolico	Colonia Center shared space	Del Rio
Shannon Wellness Program	Youth programs	Del Rio
Border Organization	Resident advocacy	Del Rio

⁷ For Medicaid, TANF, and Food Stamp sources, see previous footnote. CHIP data from ACS - A010 CHIP Monthly Enrollment File for September 2005 prepared by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Demographics Team, Strategic Decision Support.

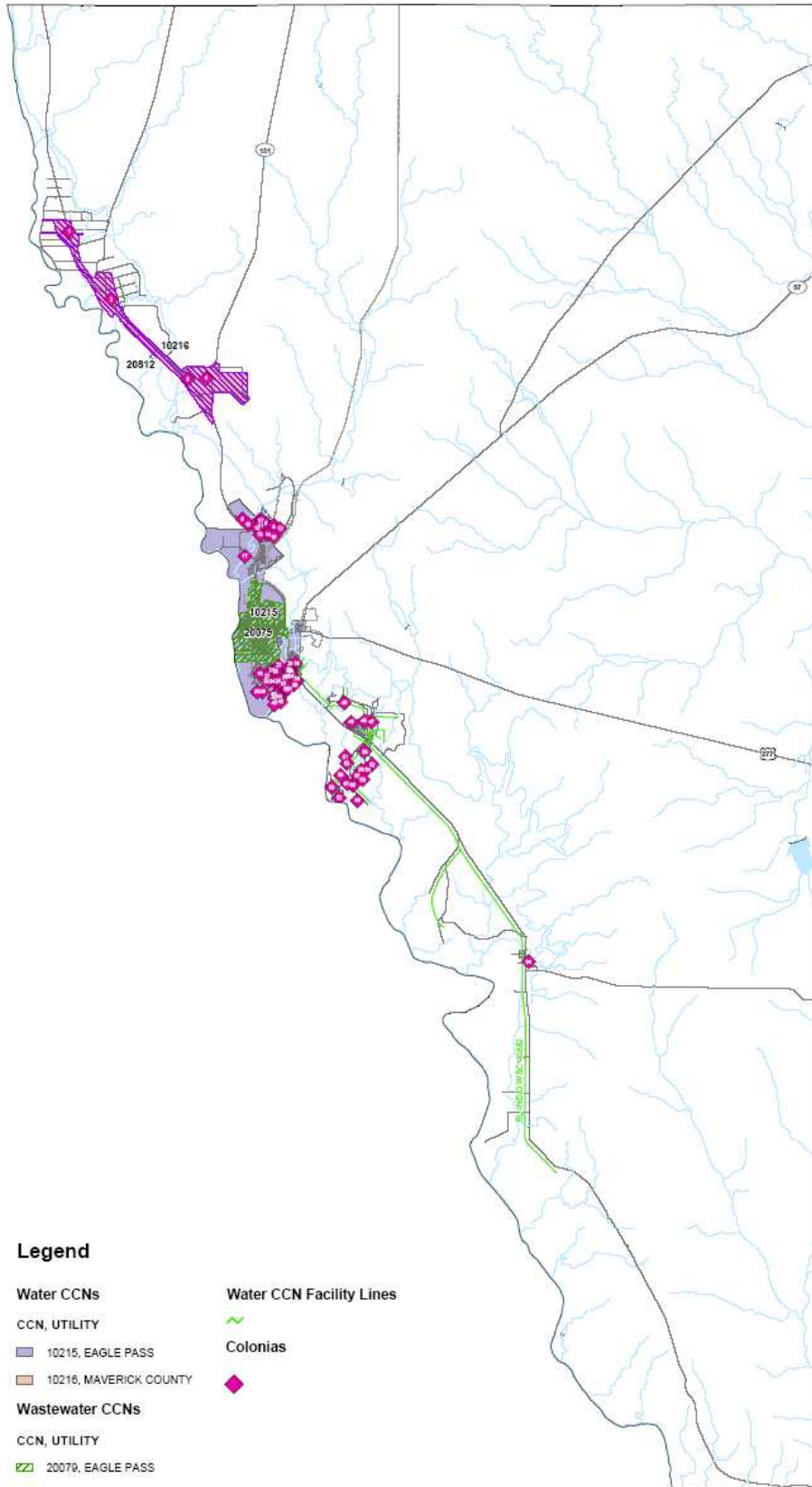
⁸ Does not include representatives of the Health and Human Services agencies.

AGENCY	TYPE OF SERVICE	CITY
Community Action Social Service and Education (CASSE)	Emergency assistance and colonia center space	Eagle Pass
Eagle Pass Housing Authority	Housing and computer resource center	Eagle Pass
Eagle Pass Independent School District	Education	Eagle Pass
Fort Duncan Medical Center	Medical care	Eagle Pass
Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas	Social services and youth programs	Eagle Pass
Kickapoo Oklahoma Tribe	Clinic	Eagle Pass
Kickapoo (HOPE K)	Social and health services, child welfare	Eagle Pass
Maverick County Loma Bonita Self Help Center	Home improvement, computer center, shared space	Eagle Pass
Methodist Health Care Ministries	Outreach in colonias-- screenings, nutrition education.	Eagle Pass
Office of Secretary of State	Colonias Initiative activities (infrastructure issues)	Eagle Pass
Seco Mines Community Center and A&M Colonias Program	Transportation and referrals	Eagle Pass
CSD of Texas	Deaf and hard of hearing services	Eagle Pass and Del Rio
Middle Rio Grande Development Council	Job referral, training, etc.	Eagle Pass and Del Rio
Texas Workforce Commission	Migrant outreach services	Eagle Pass and Del Rio
United Medical Center	Health services	Eagle Pass and Del Rio

AGENCY	TYPE OF SERVICE	CITY
Texas Migrant Program, Inc.	Head Start Program, outreach services, <i>etc.</i>	Eagle Pass and Del Rio
UT School of Public Health Cancer Information Service	Cancer resources	Brownsville
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Health Education Training Centers Alliance of Texas (HETCAT)	Training resources for health professionals	San Antonio
Tomasino Dental Practice	Mobile van	San Antonio

MAVERICK COUNTY

Colonias



Legend

Water CCNs

CCN, UTILITY

10215, EAGLE PASS

10216, MAVERICK COUNTY

Wastewater CCNs

CCN, UTILITY

20079, EAGLE PASS

20812, MAVERICK COUNTY

Water CCN Facility Lines

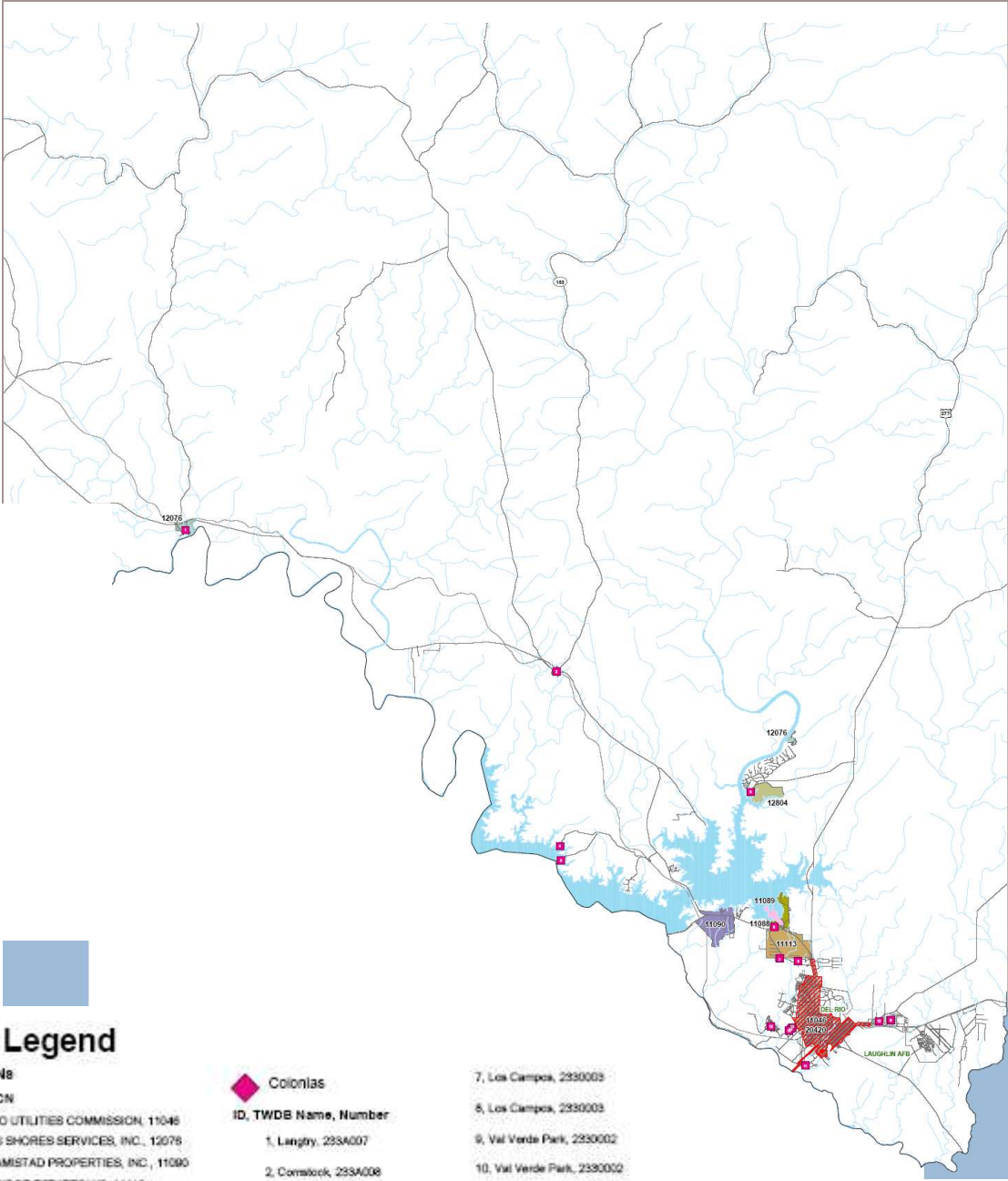


Colonias



ID	Colonia Name	Number
1	Quemado	1620040
2	Normandy	1620041
3	Airport Addition	1620037
4	Radar Base	1620039
5	Elm Creek 1 & 2	1620029
6	South Elm Creek	1620030
7	South Elm Creek	1620030
8	Deer Run 1-5	1620028
9	Deer Run 1-5	1620028
10	Elm Creek 1 & 2	1620029
11	South Elm Creek	1620030
12	Deer Run 1-5	1620028
13	South Elm Creek	1620030
14	Deer Run 1-5	1620028
15	Deer Run 1-5	1620028
16	Sauz Creek	1620031
17	Hopedale	1620047
18	Las Quintas Fronteriz	1620021
19	Loma Bonita	1620009
20	Cedar Ridge I&II	1620049
21	Neillis Lands	1620012
22	Morales Circle	1620050
23	Las Hacienditas	1620043
24	Cedar Ridge I&II	1620049
25	Cedar Ridge I&II	1620049
26	Cedar Ridge I&II	1620049
27	Lago Vista	1620047
28	Morales	1620013
29	Hector Rodriguez	1620039
30	Morales	
31	Big River Park	1620038
32	Las Brisas	1620004
33	Las Carretas	1620044
34	Morales	1620013
35	Morales	
36	Los Jardines Verdes	1620027
37	Wilson & Bargo	1620051
38	Green Acres	1620018
39	Paisano Heights	1620017
40	Eagle Heights	1620007
41	Zamora Lands	1620052
42	Eagle Heights	1620007
43	La Herradura	1620046
44	Eagle Heights	1620007
45	Rockaway Country Site	1620001
46	Eagle Heights	1620007
47	Chula Vista 1-5	1620002
48	Pueblo Nuevo	1620022
49	Chula Vista School B	1620053
50	Loma Linda	1620003
51	Los Guajillos	1620023
52	Loma Linda	1620003
53	Rosita Valley	
54	Loma Linda	1620003
55	Loma Linda	1620003
56	Riverside Acres	1620024
57	Loma Linda Ranchette	1620026
58	Loma Linda	1620003
59	Florentine Ramos	1620059
60	Rosita Valley	1620018
61	Victoriano Hernandez	1620036
62	Kickapoo Indian Villa	1620020
63	Rosita Gardens	1620061
64	El Indio Townsite	1620025

VAL VERDE COUNTY



Map Legend

Water CCNs

UTILITY, CCN

- DEL RIO UTILITIES COMMISSION, 11048
- DEVILS SHORES SERVICES, INC., 12078
- LAKE AMISTAD PROPERTIES, INC., 11089
- LAKE RIDGE ESTATES WS, 11113
- ROUGH CANYON MARINA, 12804
- SAN PEDRO CANYON WATER COMPANY, 11089
- SAN PEDRO VILLAGE, 11088

Wastewater CCNs

UTILITY, CCN

- DEL RIO UTILITIES COMMISSION, 20420

Colonias

ID, TWDB Name, Number

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1, Langtry, 233A007 2, Comstock, 233A008 3, Rough Canyon, 233A012 4, Box Canyon Estates, 233A009 5, Amistad Acres, 233A011 6, Lake View Estates, 233A010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7, Los Campos, 2330003 8, Los Campos, 2330003 9, Val Verde Park, 2330002 10, Val Verde Park, 2330002 11, Rio Bravo, 2330004 12, Cienegas Terrace, 2330001 13, Owens, 2330005 14, Owens, 2330005 15, Payment, 2330008 |
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