

# UTRGV, HESTEC recognized as Bright Spot in Hispanic Education

BY DANYA PEREZ-HERNANDEZ STAFF WRITER

EDINBURG — This year's Hispanic Engineering Science and Technology week, known as HESTEC, at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley began with the presentation of a White House recognition on Monday.

UTRGV along with Rep. Rubén Hinojosa, who helped found the weeklong conference in 2001, were presented with the 2015 Bright Spot award for HESTEC and the university's role in advocating and preparing students for careers in STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"Today, I applaud the great investments you have made to create HESTEC, the Center for Excellence in STEM Education, STEM-focused Early College High Schools, and robotics programs right here in South Texas," said White House Representative Alejandra Ceja during the presentation. "People come from all over the Rio Grande Valley to see the STEM opportunities that you all have made come true for students."

Ceja, the executive director of the White House

Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, visited the university's Edinburg campus representing President Barack Obama to award a certificate of recognition.

More than 600,000 high tech jobs went unfilled across the United States in 2015, Ceja said, and by 2022 there will be a need for about 1 million graduates in these fields. It is programs like HESTEC that could help fill these jobs, she added.

This is HESTEC's 15th anniversary and according to university officials it has now reached over 58,000 middle and high school students and about 22,000 college students. Parents are also exposed to these fields during some of the sessions such as Latina Day, where about 400 mothers and daughters gather to hear from experts in these fields.

"By providing educators the latest in cutting-edge technology and best practices in STEM education, providing parents tools to inspire and help their children navigate the higher education maze, and providing students the opportunity to interact with and be motivated by professional role models in STEM fields, HESTEC has changed the very fabric of our community," states the White House's Bright Spots in Hispanic Education website.

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View photos of HESTEC Educator Day-Congressional Panel.



## ELECTION

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Cortez, 23, graduated last year from the University of Saint Mary in Kansas with a bachelor's degree in sports management. He is currently not employed, but plans to work on a graduate degree in physical therapy once elections are over.

"It's always the same people running for office, so I want to make a change," he said. "I want to make a difference for the community and the school."

Ramirez, a 37-year-old network and system administrator, declined to comment.

### PLACE 6

Pruneda, the board secretary, will be challenged by Sanchez.

Sanchez, a teacher, ran for Hidalgo city council member earlier this year, but dropped out of the race before elections began. The 29-year-old could not be

reached for comment.

Pruneda, 36-year-old nurse, declined to comment.

### PLACE 7

Treviño, a school board member and the executive director for the Hidalgo Economic Development Corporation, will face off against Arredondo. He could not be reached for comment.

Arredondo, 34, is an assistant principal for Kennedy Middle School in Pharr and a former Valley View graduate. She has spent seven years in education, and her children also attend Valley View schools.

"I have an interest in Valley View being the best," she said. "I want to give them the opportunities that other kids have in other districts."

Arredondo said she plans to focus on extracurricular activities and making sure both male and female athletes are promoted.

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## AGUA SUD

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and be able to assist Agua SUD in any capacity that I can."

Attorneys for the district said they will advertise and will be accepting applications for the permanent executive director. Cancino would not say whether he would apply for the position.

Former Executive Director Julio Cerda, who was hired in May 2015, tendered his resignation during a special meeting last week. He offered to stay until Oct. 10 to allow for a smooth transition but the board voted to accept his resignation effective immediately.

Cerda's assistant, Rudy Flores, was appointed interim at the same meeting, but Monday night the board voted to reinstate Flores as the assistant executive director.

"He helped us in the transition, especially when Mr. Cerda left," said board President Roger Hernandez. He explained the move was due to Flores' wish to return to his position.

The board also authorized their attorneys to put together rules of conduct and decorum for their meetings.

The new rules are in response to the disorderly crowd that attended the previous meeting. Members of the crowd made their opinions known long after the public forum had ended and often interjected as the board of directors worked through the agenda.

The board had intended to vote on an interlocal agreement with the Palmview Police Department to provide security and enforce the new rules. However, Hernandez said the police department declined for political reasons.

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# TABC: Alcohol retailers near colleges meeting standards

More than 1,300 stores checked; 128 not compliant

STAFF REPORT

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission said Monday stores around the state were meeting compliance standards with regard to the selling of alcohol to minors.

As part of a statewide operation that coincided with the return of students to universities and colleges across the state, the TABC released findings Monday that showed a 90 percent compliance rate statewide, according to a news release.

The findings are a result of a weeklong series of "stings" executed by TABC agents in more than 1,300 alcohol retailers in the state that are located near major colleges and universities, the release states.



Valley Morning Star

TABC officers are seen working during spring break 2012.

Of the 1,337 retailers checked during the stings, a total of 128 were issued administrative violations for selling alcohol to a minor, according to the news release.

"Overall, we're pleased with the results of this year's operation, which shows that the majority of retailers are taking their responsibilities seriously," TABC Director of Field

Operations Chief Robert Saenz said. "Even so, we're committed to working with our retailers to provide training and support in order to help them recognize the dangers of selling alcohol to minors."

In the San Antonio/South Texas region, TABC officials checked 344 off-premise locations and found that 30 sales had been made. TABC officials

"Overall, we're pleased with the results of this year's operation, which shows that the majority of retailers are taking their responsibilities seriously."

Robert Saenz TABC director of Field Operations chief

also checked 85 on-premise locations and found that 13 sales had been made, according to the release.

TABC officials said businesses cited for selling alcohol to anyone under 21 years of age could face possible administrative action such as fines or a suspension of their license or permit — employees caught selling alcohol to minors could face misdemeanor charges.

# Construction work to cause road closure in Mission

STAFF REPORT

PHARR — Construction work on Expressway 83/I-2 in the Mission area will cause some travel delays today.

J.D. Abrams, a TxDOT

contractor, will be placing deck panels for the westbound main lane bridge of the expressway as part of the Inspiration Road Project, the agency announced Monday.

A complete closure of Business 83 will occur be-

tween the westbound and eastbound frontage of Expressway 83/I-2 today from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The reconstruction project consists of the expansion of the expressway from a four-lane to a six-lane roadway in the

Mission area.

The traveling public is encouraged to seek an alternate route, follow the appropriate signage to their destination, observe all warning signs, and be aware of the construction in the area.

## HEALTH

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nationals with wellness resources both locally and abroad that they may not know about or be able to attain without assistance, according to Mexican Consul José Guillermo Ordorica Robles.

"This is a call for awareness for the people about the importance of check-ups, issues such as diabetes, cholesterol, high blood pressure, AIDS," he said. "All these kinds of things that can be variously detected can be done here, performed by the people representing different institutions."

For the first time this year, the Mexican consul in Canada has joined the fight to help its populations there, joining the ranks of other involved countries such as Honduras.

"The same that happens here, our consuls in that country work the same as we do here to promote awareness and to increase good lifestyles to prevent people from having diseases," Ordorica Robles said.

While the event is called a health week, consulate

officer Alan Torres said this sort of assistance extends beyond early October.

"This is not only promoting the health services," he said. "The consulate is providing the Mexican nationals with health information regarding the different sectors of the different health system here in the United States all year long."

As time goes on, Binational Health Week only grows, Torres said. In its

early years, about six health agencies were involved. Now there are more than 30, including hospitals and other medical institutions in Mexico.

Olivarez expressed high hopes for multinational cooperation in the future.

"Hopefully in the next few weeks there will be a meet-up here in McAllen with several Mexican states so we can discuss public health and to see

what we can do at the border to ensure well-being in the surrounding counties," he said.

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