

YO CUENTO LOGO HERE

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**U.S. Census Bureau Distributes Census Forms, Judge Ramirez Launches Yo Cuento Campaign**

***Hidalgo County Residents Encouraged to Complete and Mail-Back 2010 Census Form***

EDINBURG, TX – Today, the U.S. Census Bureau distributed the 2010 Census to more than 130 million addresses across the nation. Mandated by the U.S. Constitution and conducted every 10 years, the census counts every man, woman and child. Mailing back the census form is the easiest way to participate in the 2010 Census, and every household should complete and mail back the form upon receipt.

“The 2010 Census is vitally important to the future of our county. The data gathered will determine funding for vital local services, such as education, health care and transportation, and it will also affect representation at all levels of government,” said Hidalgo County Judge Rene A. Ramirez, who launched the “Yo Cuento” campaign this week to counteract Census apathy in Hidalgo County.

The “Yo Cuento” campaign is aimed at “getting out the count,” Ramirez said. “We want to reach the hardest to count areas of Hidalgo County — the colonias, our veterans, students at South Texas College and the University of Texas-Pan American. We want every voice to be heard. I count, you count and we all count is the message we are trying to get across.”

Elements of the “Yo Cuento” campaign include a web site, [www.yocuento2010.com](http://www.yocuento2010.com), which tells of the importance to Hidalgo County specifically, an array of Spanish-language advertisements that will be airing XXXX, and marketing collateral materials that are being delivered primarily to colonias via La Union del Pueblo Entero volunteers.

LUPE and Vox Veritas, LLC are partners in this privately-funded endeavor.

“The ‘Yo Cuento’ campaign is working in tandem with our Hidalgo County Census Complete Count Committee’s efforts as well,” Ramirez said. “The complete count committee, established last year, has been working hard to get the message to these hardest to count areas as well by attending events, visiting schools and being very proactive about distributing materials. The CCC attained 50 microgrants from the U.S. Census Bureau worth about \$3,000 each so that our county departments would have outreach materials. They have been working diligently on getting the word out that taking 10 minutes to fill out 10 questions will affect the next 10 years,” Judge Ramirez said.

Members of the Hidalgo County Complete Count Committee include representatives from all four precincts, as well as the County Judge’s Office.

Pct. 2 Commissioner Hector "Tito" Palacios said: "Households served by the United States Postal Service will receive their forms in March 2010. Census workers will hand-deliver forms through April 2010 in all other areas. One of the shortest census forms in U.S. Census history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete."

"Every person living in the residence, both relatives and non-relatives, should be included on the form. People should be counted in the residence where they live and sleep most of the time," Commissioner Palacios said.

Census data are used to reapportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and for the subsequent redistricting of state and local governments. Census data also help to determine how more than \$400 billion per year in federal funding is distributed to tribal, state and local governments for services that affect local communities. Specifically, census data are critical in determining locations for new hospitals, improving schools, building new roads, expanding public transportation options and creating new maps for emergency responders.

Census form answers are safe and confidential. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

Mailing back a form ensures an accurate count and lowers the cost of the 2010 Census by reducing the number of census workers who must go door-to-door to collect census data. About \$85 million is saved for every one percent increase in mail participation. Additionally, the Census Bureau saves \$60-\$70 per census form returned by mail.

Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) will be available to assist those unable to read or understand the census form. For those with visual impairments, the Language Assistance Guide will be available in large print and Braille. Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons who do not have access to Video Relay Service (VRS) can call the TDD number, 1-866-783-2010. In addition to these options, Language Assistance Guides will be available in 59 languages at all QAC locations.

Listing of Hidalgo County QACs:

<Getting from Felicia>

For more information, please visit [www.yocuento2010.com](http://www.yocuento2010.com)