



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Ramon Garcia
County Judge

A. C. Cuellar, Jr.
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Joseph Palacios
Commissioner, Precinct 4

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 29, 2015

Hidalgo County Declares Local State of Disaster for damages from weekend storms

EDINBURG – Hidalgo County Judge Ramon Garcia signed a local state of disaster declaration due to the flood that hit the eastern portion of the county October 23-25. The declaration is the first step in requesting state and federal disaster aid for persons and government organizations that sustained damages and lost property during the rain event.

Commissioner A.C. Cuellar's office, the Office of Emergency Management and other county assets and emergency responders acted quickly working to evacuate residents whose homes were flooded as well as to provide resources to the Cities and rural areas of Precinct 1 most impacted by flooding, said County Judge Ramon Garcia.

The declaration was signed Tuesday, Oct. 27 and is effective for a period of not more than seven days.

Some areas received 10 to 13 inches of rain in a three hour period on Saturday, as the remnants of Hurricane Patricia. OEM Coordinator Ricardo "Rick" Saldana likened the impact of the torrential rain to damages sustained during Hurricane Dolly. In addition to pumping water out of flooded areas and providing assistance to those in need, the county partnered with the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank to take a week's worth of groceries to families stranded due to flooded neighborhoods.

Even though the National Weather Service has downgraded its forecast predicting potentially heavy rains early Friday morning to scattered showers, Precinct 1 urges all area residents to take precautions and will be distributing sandbags beginning Thursday afternoon, said Cuellar.

"If you picked up sandbags, please keep them to reuse," said Cuellar. "Residents who are still experiencing flooding on their streets or property should consider evacuation. Even a couple of inches of rain can cause harm in areas that are already saturated with water."

Sandbags will be distributed at Precinct 1 today (Thursday, Oct. 29) from 1 to 8 p.m. and Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Sunrise Hills Park by the Pavilion on Mile 1^{1/2} West and Mile 11 North in Mercedes. The other three Hidalgo County Precincts will be on standby to provide assistance to Precinct 1 or residents in their precincts. Weather updates will be posted on the County's social media sites.

The County's hotline will not be activated unless there is a change in the forecast. Residents who call the hotline will be directed to their precinct offices or to call 911 if it is an emergency. The hotline number for information-only is: 956-292-7750.

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Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the 800,000 residents of our county as well as a variety of services to residents who live outside city limits. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility.