



THE STATE OF TEXAS

REPRESENTATIVE
EDDIE LUCIO III
TEXAS HOUSE DISTRICT 42

REPRESENTATIVE
SERGIO MUÑOZ, JR.
TEXAS HOUSE DISTRICT 36

CONTACT: RUBEN O'BELL
956-542-2800

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CONTACT: RICHARD P. SANCHEZ
956-369-1010

REPRESENTATIVES EDDIE LUCIO III & SERGIO MUÑOZ, JR. ANNOUNCE SELECTION OF THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL ALERT SYSTEM ISSUING AUTHORITY

RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS - At a press conference today, State Representative Eddie Lucio III and State Representative Sergio Muñoz, Jr. formally announced the appointment of the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office as the Issuing Authority of the Regional Alert System being developed for the Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy County region. The system, now nearing completion, is known as the Rio Grande Valley Regional Alert System (RGV RAS).

Meeting earlier today, the RGV RAS Task Force selected the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office as its Issuing Authority... the law enforcement agency that will be responsible for managing alert operations of the three county regional alert system. Appointment of the Issuing Authority marks a major milestone in the development of the RGV RAS, which through its Task Force has developed guidelines on the type of alerts to be issued and the criteria for which an alert may be triggered, and has researched the type of communications system and network that will be required to make the RGV RAS a success.

In 2013 it was Rep. Lucio and Rep. Muñoz who began the process of developing the RAS for the Valley at the urging of the Harlingen Police Department based on two missing persons cases that plagued the area. Bringing resources from the Texas Department of Public Safety, which operates the statewide Amber Alert System, the pair of lawmakers successfully guided local officials through the preliminary stages of the process and to date have been a constant part of the Task Force and development of the system. With the appointment of the Issuing Authority, the state lawmakers will now play a secondary role, allowing local officials to implement and operate the system as it was intended since inception.

"We could not be more pleased and proud to be a part of this process and to announce the selection of the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office as the Issuing Authority for the Regional Alert System," said Representatives Muñoz and Lucio in a joint statement. "With Sheriff Guerra at the helm of the office, we are confident that the RGV RAS is in good hands and that the system will be sustained in the best interest of the people of the Valley."

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In addition to managing alert operations, the Issuing Authority is responsible for selecting an Alert Coordinator who will oversee daily operations of the system, developing and instituting a process to review and update alert criteria, oversight of alert activations and leading the After Action Review of each alert, maintaining the alert network and communications system, training, and testing of the system, among other responsibilities.

The RGV RAS Task Force, in its selection process developed the following criteria to be met by nominees:

- Nominee for Issuing Authority must have 24/7 operation capability
- Nominee must have 24/7 supervisor or command presence
- Nominee must have 24/7 Public Information Officer availability
- Nominee must be capable of issuing electronic alerts
- Nominee must be capable of creating the RGV RAS website
- Nominee must be capable of creating and maintaining the RGV RAS database

Currently there are 17 regional alert systems across the State of Texas, serving a majority of Texans by providing alerts in those respective regions. Each of the alert systems, including the statewide system managed by the Department of Public Safety, are modeled after the original Amber Alert System created in the Dallas area in 1996.

The RGV RAS will be an additional tool for law enforcement agencies to use in an effort to recover missing or abducted persons.

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