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### **COMMISSIONER'S COURT APPROVES WEST RAIL AND NORTH RAIL MOU'S**

Today, the Cameron County Commissioners Court approved two Memorandum of Understandings with Union Pacific Railroad for two critical projects in Cameron County; the West Rail Relocation project in Brownsville and the North Rail Relocation in Harlingen. Both projects will enhance safety, reduce congestion and provide for much stronger growth and development in and around the downtown areas of the respective cities.

The West Rail project calls for the relocation of the current railroad tracks leading to the international rail bridge as well as the rail component of the bridge that currently passes through the downtown areas of Brownsville and Matamoros to a more rural area west of the cities. This \$35 million project will alleviate the bottlenecks at the busiest intersections that occur at the busiest times of the day in and around the commercial and shopping districts of both cities. Judge Cascos and members of the Commissioners Court are all looking forward to getting this project under construction early in 2010. "This project will be the first international rail bridge project constructed on the U.S.-Mexico border in over 100 years, Cascos stated. He went on to say that there are many agencies and officials at the federal, state, and local level on both sides of the border that have helped move this project to its current state and thanked all for their support especially our partners in Matamoros."

The North Rail project will consist of phase one of an overall rail relocation plan for northern Cameron County. This phase calls for Union Pacific relocating all of their current switching operations at the downtown facility in Harlingen to the Olmito switchyard. The Rio Valley Switching Company that currently operates within the confines of the switchyard in Harlingen will remain at the current yard but will limit their operation within the existing rail yard. Judge Cascos stated, "this first phase is intended to end the switching that occurs in downtown Harlingen on the busiest intersections of the city. Union Pacific will do all of their switching of trains at the Olmito yard. This is a good first step to the overall goal of completely taking out all of the rail operations from downtown Harlingen."

"The goal of the county and its partners is to continue pursuing funding for the overall plan to build a new yard north of Harlingen. There were numerous partners that worked on these MOU's as well as obtaining the funding for this \$17 million project which included the city leaders in Harlingen and we appreciate the support of all in enabling us to get to this point," he went on to say.

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