



For Immediate Release

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Mixed Use Development with Hotel, Convention Center, Restaurants, and Retail Coming to San Benito



San Benito, Texas – San Benito City Commission formally approved a development agreement with Western Spherical Developers, LLC for Rio Grande Valley Epicenter (RGVE), a \$115 M mixed-use Commercial 38-acre development (first phase of an overall 65-acre development) located at the northeast corner of I-69 and Hwy. 509. The Rio Grande Valley Epicenter project will establish San Benito as a key partner in the Rio Grande Valley market with national attractions for tourism and business, a dynamic cultural center, stimulating economic opportunities through job creation and training in partnership with education, community organizations, and regional leadership.

“This project is a big game-changer for our economy. And, there is more to come,” said Mayor Ben Gomez.

Proposed plans for RGV Epicenter distinguish this project from other mixed-use developments, incorporating a diverse scope of amenities including affordable family entertainment, retail, restaurants, live entertainment, a medical wellness center, interactive educational initiatives, and Class A office space. These amenities position RGV Epicenter as a catalyst for innovative business initiatives and partnerships that translate into opportunities for job creation with higher wage scales, significantly adding to the San Benito tax base and enhanced quality of life.

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Developer David C. Miles, Manager, Western Spherical Developers, and the development team are located in Friendswood, Texas.

“The construction, development and operation of RGV Epicenter will create approximately 319 full time construction jobs and 758 direct and indirect full time local jobs during the construction phase, and another 1,013 direct and indirect full-time local jobs during the operation of the hotel and convention center,” Miles said.

The hotel and convention center will attract convention/conferences and exhibits in addition to serving as a venue for events and concerts. Set among other Epicenter and regional amenities, the hotel and convention center will be well-positioned to attract regional, national and international interests. Additionally, the hotel and convention center will collaborate in supporting and/or enhancing existing regional events and potentially participating in the creation of new events. Marketing initiatives will include cross-promotional and partnership marketing initiatives to diverse markets, industry resources and marketing platforms.

The concept for RGV Epicenter dates back to September 2018, when Miles approached City Manager Manuel De La Rosa to propose construction of a hotel and convention center. Strategies ensued to determine a course of action to make the project a reality.

With the assistance of a consulting firm, City Manager Manuel De La Rosa met with State Senator Lucio and State Rep. Lucio to discuss introduction of legislation during the 86th Legislative session. The initiative to create economic development incentives was achieved in HB 4347 and HB 2199 designed to support development projects with specific amenities. The approved bills will assist in funding the construction of the proposed RGV Epicenter project that includes entertainment venues. With the achievement of the legislative bills, negotiations continued at a steady pace and resulted in the signed agreement by City Commission this week.

“The agreement unanimously approved by the City Commission will facilitate financial mechanisms to bring about a variety of retail, sporting, dining, lodging, entertainment and educational facilities to San Benito. This is legislation of historic proportion for San Benito and South Texas,” Commissioner Rene Villafranco said.

“An underlying mission for the Epicenter complex is to enhance quality of life, participate as an active community partner promoting area events for families and visitors, business and innovative opportunities, and supporting job creation and training for the San Benito and surrounding Lower Rio Grande Valley communities. Equally important is the promotion of robust visitor and business opportunities with regional, national and international interests.” Miles added, “Epicenter is positioned to support and further advance the region’s growth opportunities in the industries of aerospace, medical, agricultural, energy, transportation, sports and entertainment, and ecotourism. Great opportunities also exist to celebrate the Latino Heritage of music, dance and visual art.”

Commitments are already in place from interested tenants in RGV Epicenter including a medical wellness center, Waypoint 2 Space, Space 2 Fly, and Crystal Lagoon. Active discussions are underway with additional significant entertainment and business entities.

With successful projects in multiple states, the wellness medical center, is brokered/sponsored by USI Insurance Services, a solutions-driven and community-focused industry leader in commercial insurance services and risk management. The medical wellness center will offer a menu of medical services including emergency care, wellness care programs, and professional medical offices.

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Waypoint 2 Space and Space 2 Fly offer education and experiences related to commercial aerospace and flight simulation. Waypoint to Space is a training and education commercial facility dedicated to the preparation of commercial space initiatives and training potential personnel for service and working in commercial space facilities or stations. Waypoint 2 Space is the only FAA-approved training program in the United States. Space 2 Fly is an educational and entertainment venue offering an experiential opportunity simulating what it is like to fly in a weightless environment like the astronauts.

Crystal Lagoons is an international company offering a unique simulation of beach-like lagoons with crystal blue waters set in an aesthetically appealing tropical-style environment. The cutting-edge technology ensures quality of water and good environmental stewardship, while offering the enjoyment of a “lagoon.” The multi-acre site offers a family-friendly and clean option for water activities, dining pleasure and special events.

San Benito and the Rio Grande Valley are rich in culture and history. RGV Epicenter’s innovative design, amenities, landscaping and shade trees are planned with the spirit of San Benito in mind as a walkable, sustainable and energy efficient complex using today’s environmental best practices.

Located near an intersection of major highways and in close proximity to the Valley International Airport, the strategic location of Epicenter offers an ideal destination for regional and international visitors as well as innovative business initiatives. Epicenter will generate great interest for the South Padre Island tourist market for day trips as well as an expanded scope of overnight visitor options for lodging and entertainment.

Cameron County is strategically located to create significant opportunities with existing and future regional resources through collaborations and partnerships. A key goal to leverage and attract new resources is vital for strategic growth. There is great opportunity with the regional promotion of San Benito and the Rio Grande Valley, as a desirable region for business and a hospitality destination point with cultural, educational and recreational activities.

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