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FORT BEND COUNTY
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PRESS RELEASE

Fort Bend County Develops Largest Synchronized Emergency Advisory Broadcast System in United States

Richmond, September 19, 2007: Fort Bend County has developed the largest synchronized advisory radio system in the country operating on AM1670. According to Bill Baker, a representative of Information System Specialists, Fort Bend County "has the most synchronized stations of any county in the United States. There are no other projects of larger size within any single US county that we are aware of."

As a result of lessons learned during Hurricane Rita, the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management realized that a faster, more effective means to communicate with citizens was needed during times of crisis. In response to this need, the County has built and operates a radio station at AM 1670 whereby everyone within the county's 875 square mile area can receive up-to-date weather information, alerts, advice on major street closures, and helpful instructions during times of disaster.

"As a result of the gridlock Rita generated, staff at the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) recognized the need for a better way to communicate with all residents and evacuees using our evacuation routes," indicated Jeff Braun, Fort Bend County Emergency Management Coordinator. "The solution was found when the County was able to build the \$400,000 emergency advisory radio system using monies from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, plus a twenty-five percent local match." County Judge Bob Hebert, the County's Director of Emergency Management suggests that "everyone preset one station of their portable and car radios to AM1670. This radio frequency will allow for the effective release of accurate and timely warnings and other emergency information to the public during dangerous times."

The project included the construction of an 80-foot tower at the County EOC. This tower provides support for the broadcast antenna responsible for sending the audio program to nine satellite repeater stations that repeat the programming at various points around the County. Though the system is currently broadcasting and information was delivered during the threat of Hurricane Dean, Braun indicates that there is still more to be done. "Our project is not finished yet," Braun states. "Currently, we are looking at signage options to more fully advertise the station--- so more citizens will be aware of 1670 AM."